The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

A TIME FOR REFLECTION

The left no more than the right or the center predicted the victory of the Chamorro forces over the Sandinistas. The left no more than the right or center foresaw the uprising in China or the turbulent forces unleashed in Eastern Europe, South Africa and indeed the world.

This is a time for conversation, for asking the right questions (not the right's questions). Has the left lost its bearings because it lost its values? Has it failed to protest abuses of power by socialist regimes that are under unremitting attack by imperial enemies? Is it an adequate answer to critics to say that socialism has not been tried in its "real" or "pure" form? Is old-style revolution kaput? Will the right's consumer utopia replace the utopian vision ushered in by the French Revolution? Is Walt Disney now more influential than Mao Zedong? Is the people's cry for personal freedom and democracy yoked to an unfettered capitalist market system that delivers crisis and insecurity (as the thousands of evangelists of free enterprise recently fired on Wall Street can attest)?

What can the left do to build on its commitment to greater democracy, human rights and economic justice, which goes back to Tom Paine? Have we forgotten that the left invented nonviolent resistance to oppressive state power?

Self-questioning does not mean ignoring the grievous damage the right has done—most recently in Nicaragua (see "Spoils of War" on page 367)—and the threat it poses to democratic movements all over the world. But the left must sharpen its analysis of events and social forces and rethink its purposes and assumptions. Only by asking those questions can we convert what we feel as individuals into political consciousness and action to reconstruct the institutions of society. This effort should begin at home with eliminating the national security state.

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Leon Friedman

BEYOND MARX & MONETARISM
Sheldon Wolin

HAVEL IN WASHINGTON
Jefferson Morley

FRANK ZAPPA IN PRAGUE

ANTITRUST HITS ACADEMIA
Nicolaus Mills

THE NEW COMIX
Pagan Kennedy

RICHARD STRAUSS
Edward W. Said

SUPER COLLIDER—SUPER BUST?

GAYLE HUDGENS

The Texas mystique has taken a pretty bad beating in the past few years, what with the bankruptcies of the Hunt brothers and Braniff Airways, the resignation of Speaker of the House Jim Wright and the general malaise of the banking, real estate and oil industries. But the Lone Star State hopes to get a big boost soon—20 trillion electron volts, to be exact. That's the jolt carried by the Superconducting Super Collider that the Department of Energy wants to construct beneath the rolling farmland some twenty-five miles south of Dallas.

The collider, which is designed to study the nature of matter, is Texas-size in every respect. It would be 18,000 times bigger in diameter than the cyclotron that ushered in the atomic age more than fifty years ago. Its tunnel would be ten feet in diameter and form an underground oval more than fifty-four miles in circumference; it would contain 10,000 superconducting magnets, each one fifty-seven feet long and weighing nine tons; and it would smash subatomic particles at a velocity close to the speed of light. The most recent cost estimate for building this "big science" bonanza is almost $8 billion—just the kind of number Texas kingpins love to embrace.

Of course, the Superconducting Super Collider, or S.S.C., comes with a few problems that are also rather large: the probable removal of several hundred families from some of the 19,000 acres to be bought up for the collider and its above-ground "campus"; the projected influx of up to 30,000 people in the next decade, and all that implies

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LETTERS.

DUCK AND COVER

Newton Center, Mass.

I have read only a few of Harvey Wasserman's diatribes, but I have not yet found a description of why the activities of which he complains are hazardous, or in any other way undesirable. "Dumping on Us" [Jan. 22], his editorial on disposal of material that has a small amount of radioactivity, so small as to be below regulatory concern (B.R.C.), is typical. Nowhere does he say what the hazard might be; but he (incorrectly) implies that it is large. A simple comparison shows it is not.

Wasserman is radioactive; should he be disposed of in a special radioactive waste site when he dies, or will cremation or ordinary burial be enough? What of the paper on which he wrote his manuscript? Paper is not very radioactive, but I have measured activity in paper in my laboratory. One can distinguish some radioactive materials from others by arbitrary criteria. Most of them fail unless one is prepared to consider some quantities as small and below regulatory concern. Surely "natural" radioactivity is all right? Can one distinguish those atoms that came from nuclear fission? Yet Wasserman has inside him, in that radioactive soup he calls his body, some plutonium that came from bomb tests in the atmosphere. There are a few atoms of radioactive materials introduced into the environment for medical purposes. Even nuclear fission is "natural." Cosmic rays induce fission all the time; it is only the number of fissions that could be called unnatural. They have increased markedly since man first deliberately induced them fifty years ago.

I suggest that *The Nation* label some articles B.R.C. (beneath readers' contempt) and put them in the trash. If that is done, less forest would be cut down, and less (slightly radioactive) paper would be put into ordinary landfills. The environment would, in many ways, be improved. Wasserman's diatribes are good candidates. *Richard Wilson*
Mallinckrodt Professor of Physics
Harvard University

WASSERMAN REPLIES

Columbus, Ohio

Professor Wilson is well known as one of the nuclear reactor industry's leading apologists. But it still boggles the mind to see a professor of physics at a major university arguing with a straight face that dumping radioactive waste into civilian landfills will harm no one. Can he be serious? Did some prankster write this letter and sign Professor Wilson's name?

Whatever the case, we're now being forced to spend precious time and resources to stop Wilson's beloved industry from spewing adioactive garbage into every corner of the nerican landscape. Wilson claims this is . But on December 19, 1989, the National Research Council's Committee on the Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation, which sets the standards for radiological health impacts, found exposure to certain types of radiation to be four times as deadly as previously believed. Thus all standards for "allowable" emissions at reactor and weapons sites are completely obsolete, their revision a life-and-death matter for those nearby.

Does this mean that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, that bastion of corrupt complacency, will tighten standards at commercial reactors? Don't bet your life on it.

Does it mean our weapons production sites will finally be shut? Does it mean Wilson and his colleagues will admit they've been wrong all these years and apologize to those killed and maimed because of protective measures we now know to have been too lax?

Not a chance. Instead we get the same old nonsense from industry sophists who promised energy too cheap to meter, then blamed the economic disasters of nuclear power plants on those trying to make the reactors safe; who denied the possibility of a Three Mile Island, and now lie about those killed there; who promised a solution for the nuclear waste problem and now try to tell us the stuff won't hurt us.

The continued use of nuclear reactors and the continued production of nuclear warheads together constitute the crime of this century. The Richard Wilsons of the world would have us believe there's no harm done. But he might remember that the bodies of those killed trying to control the radioactive volcano at Chernobyl do qualify as high-level nuclear waste, as should his letter.
Harvey Wasserman

II RAVINGS 3:16–26

Jerusalem

I hope I can add a few remarks on the question of whether there are "ravings," as Alexander Cockburn claims ["Beat the Devil," Nov. 27 and Dec. 25, 1989], in the book of poetry included in the Bible ascribed to Isaiah, which I've known practically by heart for many years, in the original Hebrew. In the first place the readers of *The Nation*, most of whom, I surmise, don't know the book in detail, would be interested to know that Isaiah is represented in it as one who went completely naked for a period of three years as "a sign" (Chapter 20).

In the second place, the book contains the most antifemale passage in the whole Bible, well worth the name "ravings" (3:16–26). The Lord is represented there as being so angry with the manner of walking of "daughters of Zion" (very similar, to judge by the detailed description, to the walking of well-dressed women today) that He, so Isaiah declares, will punish them by shaving their heads and "destroying their privy parts" (so in Hebrew; the English softens the expression). I have wondered for about forty years how exactly He is going to do that, and all the commentators whom I have ever consulted on this point could not enlighten me on the details of that threat, which still faces so many women—that is, if one denies that Isaiah "raved" sometimes. Also one can find there a detailed list of twenty-one kinds of textiles and jewelry used by women. All of them, including sheets, are regarded as wicked and as bringing a variety of punishments both to the women who use them and to everyone who allows them to indulge in this wickedness. The punishments culminate in the threat of death to many in war.

Although these passages, and the whole book of Isaiah, are written in wonderful Hebrew, I am of the opinion, even when enjoying the style of the book, that "ravings" is a quite accurate expression to describe much of it. *Israel Shahak*

'ATHEISTIC BLINDERS'

Crawfordsville, Ind.

What began as a moving recollection of the prejudices of Yugoslav Communism against Christianity [Slavenka Drakulić, "My First Midnight Mass," Feb. 12] turned disappointingly into another exemplification of those very prejudices. Until the last paragraph we were led to believe that the author had experienced a renewed appreciation for religion after the death of her army officer father, an ideologically rigorous Communist, and at the beginning of religious freedoms in Eastern Europe. Instead, after describing her experiences at the mass she claims that it is all too much: "I felt as if, after being hungry for so long, I had overeaten." As if the church, which has been on the side of freedom in Eastern Europe, should not be allowed to celebrate its part in the victories. The real lesson to be learned from recent events in these countries is that Christians share the goals of those who work for democracy and equality. Indeed, the spiritual dimension to human nature cannot be obliterated, and it is precisely that dimension that urges all of us forward in our struggle for a better world. It is time for Marxism to lose its atheistic blinders. *Stephen H. Webb*

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Paterson, N.J.

Here is some more trivia concerning the Bush/Noonan conundrum of the source of that pseudo-epigrammatic utterance of our leader, the thousand points of light ["Letters," Sept. 25 and Nov. 13, 1989].

William Bradford, a member of the original Pilgrims, who came here to set up their own absolute rule, wrote as Governor of Plymouth Colony, ". . . as one small candle may light a thousand, so light here kindled hath shown unto many, yea in some sort to our whole nation." *John Sargis*

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EDITORIALS.

Spoils of War

Take pity of your town and of your people,
Whiles yet my soldiers are in my command;
Whiles yet the cool and temperate wind of grace
O'erblows the filthy and contagious clouds
Of heady murder, spoil, and villainy.
If not, why, in a moment look to see
The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand
Defile the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters;
Your fathers taken by the silver beards,
And their most reverend heads dash'd to the walls;
Your naked infants spitted upon pikes,
Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confus'd
Do break the clouds, as did the wives of Jewry
At Herod's bloody-hunting slaughtermen.
What say you? will you yield, and this avoid?
Or, guilty in defence, be thus destroy'd?

Henry V issues this threat at the gates of H
In its essentials King Harry's bargain o
sion or torment is what the United
offered Nicaragua for the past t
Central America for the whole of the prese
The defeat of Daniel Ortega by Viole

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Chamorro shows that the imperial monarchs of Washington still have more weapons at their disposal, at least in this last redoubt of American power, than we—and perhaps even they—had suspected. Historically, those weapons have included coups d'état, invasion and covert action. What we did not anticipate was that the arsenal could include elections, as free and open as any skeptical observer could wish. Elections, if the groundwork is properly laid, may even deliver the *coup de grâce.*

We failed to predict the outcome of this election; so did the opinion polls; so, by all indications, did the Sandinistas. Why the upset? No doubt because many voters were sick of the authoritarian aspects of a revolutionary society at war; but more to the point, whatever Nicaraguans may have told foreign pollsters, they had digested the terms of the imperial ultimatum, driven home so cynically at the last moment by Bush and Baker, who told them that even a clean Sandinista victory would bring no end to the misery, and that there would always be new hoops to jump through.

The Sandinistas, with hindsight, might have seen last year's election of the rightist Arena party in El Salvador as a hint of what was in store. That was proof that if a destitute people are sufficiently ground down by war, they will vote for a party that promises peace—even if that party is a sponsor or accomplice of the war in the first place. In such circumstances, it becomes necessary to re-examine what constitutes the free and fair expression of a people's will. No doubt Nicaraguans dipped their thumbs in the right ink, penciled their crosses in the correct spot, obeyed the minutiae of election law. But the backdrop to the vote was murkier. When Washington thought it was likely to lose, it cried foul about the Sandinistas' abuses of incumbency. The real incumbent in Central America, however, is always the United States.

The present cycle of history in Central America began in the late 1970s when an economic system—dependent capitalism—became too unstable to survive without radical change. Any viable alternative had to encompass land reform, a respect for human rights and national independence. But for a decade, people who stood up for those values have been murdered, tortured, disappeared and denigrated. Who will champion the poor and the dispossessed now? When has Violeta Chamorro ever spoken of land reform? What has she ever had to say about the killing of priests and nuns by foreign hirelings?

A trio of adversaries have long contested Nicaragua: Somozas, Chamorros and Sandinistas. Doña Violeta's bickering coalition is the diminished, bastard offspring of Chamorroism, wedded in an unholy alliance with the successors of Somoza. When her husband died, Violeta was shopping in Miami. His newspaper, *La Prensa*, has become a shrieking gutter-rag. His talk of social reform has vanished from her election program; his mortal enemies are now her lieutenants.

The story is not over. Nicaraguan nationalism—*Sandinismo*—survives as an organized force, to fight again. But for now the country has been restored to what Washington considers its rightful place in the scheme of things. For decades, Nicaraguans accepted that the horizons of their existence were bounded by subservience to masters, both local and imperial, and by two bowls a day of rice and beans. When the Sandinistas had the audacity to propose that there was more to life, the ration was cut by Washington to one bowl a day, backed up with the pestilential threat of endless war. A Chamorro government will wall off again those broader horizons the revolution promised.

In exchange, a few Nicaraguans will again enjoy the freedom of the shopping mall. The majority will be granted the second bowl of rice and beans, which U.S. dollars will pay for—and for which the United States, sickeningly, will expect to be praised. With U.S. aid, Chamorro will restore Kraft cheese slices to empty supermarket shelves, and spare parts to idled fleets of John Deere tractors. But she can never restore the 65,000 lives that have been sacrificed in twelve years of war—so few of them for her cause—or rekindle the aspirations that have been so violently suffocated.

Harfleur, having listened to King Henry's ultimatum, surrendered. Now Nicaraguan voters have done what they have been bludgeoned, starved and blockaded into doing. They have, as Ronald Reagan dreamed they might, said uncle.

Copyright Wrongs

On February 20 the federal courts reached a copyright dead end when the Supreme Court refused to review the decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in the L. Ron Hubbard case. That case was a copyright infringement suit brought by the followers of L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, against Henry Holt & Company, which published a critical biography, *Bare-Faced Messiah: A Biography of L. Ron Hubbard*, written by Russell Miller [see "© Chaos, 1989," June 5, 1989]. The appeals court decision closed the door on almost any use of unpublished source material by biographers, historians or journalists. Not only does the decision state that an author is prohibited from quoting more than "minimal" amounts—undefined—from any diary, journal or letter still subject to copyright protection (all unpublished materials are covered by American copyright law until the year 2003), it also holds that a court must issue an injunction against any book or magazine violating such copyrights.

Beginning with a Supreme Court case brought by Harper & Row complaining of *The Nation*'s quotation of 300 words from the memoirs of former President Gerald Ford, the federal courts in New York City, home to most of the book-publishing industry, have taken an ever more restrictive view of what constitutes fair use under the copyright law. In the *Nation* case the Supreme Court said that the use of 300 words from an about-to-be-published autobiography of about 200,000 words in a news story about the book was not fair use. Then the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit held that quoting 250 words from unpublished letters of J.D. Salinger scattered in many libraries in a biography of Salinger written by Ian Hamilton was not fair use and enjoined publication.

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Finally, in the L. Ron Hubbard case, the court closed the door on virtually any quotation of unpublished journals or letters. Because the plaintiff had waited too long to bring suit, the decision did not stop publication of *Bare-Faced Messiah*, but the court concluded that "unpublished materials normally enjoy complete protection" and therefore "the copying of 'more than minimal amounts' of unpublished material calls for an injunction barring the unauthorized use."

Many historians, biographers and journalists, as well as representatives of the publishing industry, expressed amazement that the courts could be so blind to the needs of authors to quote from original sources. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. wrote in *The Wall Street Journal* that "when responsible scholars gain legitimate access to unpublished materials, copyright should not be permitted to deny them use of quotations that help to establish historical points." Taylor Branch called the decision "a severe blow to history."

Since the decision involved an interpretation of the copyright law, Congress can correct the error by amending the law. Indeed, representatives of various publishing and authors' groups, including the Association of American Publishers and PEN American Center, have been working together to prepare a joint proposal to Congress to overturn the Hubbard decision. Any legislative change must take account of four separate problems produced by the *Nation*, Salinger and Hubbard line of cases:

§ New legislation should eliminate the distinction between published and unpublished works as far as quotation is concerned. That difference, originally created by the *Nation* case, has been the basis for the subsequent impasse caused by the Salinger and Hubbard decisions. (Indeed, the author of the Hubbard decision, Judge Robert Miner, suggested in a speech on the subject that this sort of legislative change is

(*Continued on Page 385*)

'Newhoused'

Two weeks ago we reported the widespread rumors in the publishing industry that Pantheon Books was about to be cut back or even eliminated by its parent, Random House (see "End of the Line?" March 5). We said Pantheon's continuing existence was "a test case" of the promises made when S.I. and Donald Newhouse's Advance Publications acquired Random House and said that nothing would change. Random House has flunked the test. In a February 27 publicity release it announced that André Schiffrin, head of Pantheon, had "resigned." According to *The New York Times*, Schiffrin chose to leave rather than drastically cut back his list. The following day four Pantheon senior editors handed in their resignations. Below, we publish a statement in which they set forth their reasons.

"Like others before, like many to come, Pantheon has been Newhoused," says senior editor Tom Engelhardt in a supplementary statement. "If there is such a thing as white-collar crime, there should be another category called 'cultural crime,'" he adds. The Pantheon imprint, it appears, will continue in name only; sources in the company tell us that Random House's new chairman, Alberto Vitale, plans to cut Pantheon's list by two-thirds, with a corresponding elimination of staff.

Pantheon has long documented the lives and stories of people who risked being forcibly disappeared from history. Now, Pantheon itself is being disappeared, and we deplore, and grieve for, its passing.

STATEMENT

The Pantheon we have all worked for is, we believe, ending. Good books may still be published here, but they will not be good *Pantheon* books. These, after all, were the books that involved risk—and not just to the bottom line, but politically, socially, culturally.

Such books were not incidental to our list—they were its very core; and they were the reason we worked at Pantheon for ten, and fourteen, and eighteen years. Pantheon was founded in 1942 to protect an imperiled culture; we sought to continue that tradition by bringing into public view the forgotten and the iconoclastic, the quirky and the profound, the crises faced by other cultures, and by our own. We sought as well to give voice to at least some of the victims of our age—and to expose those who abused their wealth and power. What motivated us was the commitment to provide a forum where some of the least popular but most important ideas and voices could be heard. And what encouraged us was that so often the books we believed in became classics and commercial successes, and that so many authors chose to publish with Pantheon because they believed in the values it represented.

This is not the place to explain why we feel certain that the Pantheon we have worked for is coming to an end. That will become apparent in time. The removal of André Schiffrin is only the most visible and destructive step so far in this unmistakable direction. Fundamentally, we are convinced that the commitment that led Bennett Cerf, Donald Klopfer and Bob Bernstein to support our publishing venture for so many years is no longer shared by Pantheon's current owners. Therefore we have decided to leave together, as we worked together, thankful for the opportunity we have had to be involved with Pantheon and its authors—but also in sorrow and anger over the damage that is being done.

James Peck, senior editor 1972–1990
Tom Engelhardt, senior editor 1976–1990
Wendy Wolf, senior editor 1976–1990
Sara Bershtel, senior editor 1980–1990

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

I have seldom been more upset than I was when I read Simon Schama's book *Citizens* and discovered that one of my favorite historical anecdotes was based on misinterpretation. I had always believed, and had often said, that on July 14, 1789, the fatuous King Louis had made an entry in his diary and that the entry read, simply enough, "*Rien*." Well, it turns out that he did make such an entry, and on that very day too, but the diary was his game book, and he was merely recording his failure to slaughter any beasts of the field while faraway Paris got on with its vulgar life.

The fall of later Bastilles has often led to what historians and journalists wrongly term a post-mortem. Why is it that the Russian, Chinese, Cuban, Vietnamese, Iranian and Palestinian revolutions, to name only the most obvious, came to Americans as a surprise? Walter Lippmann once wrote an article called "A Test of the News" on this subject as it applied to Russia, considering it from a pragmatic liberal point of view. But generally the question can be asked only when the murk has dispelled and the experts can be tested. And not much is ever learned from hindsight, even if reputations can be founded upon it.

It's one thing to have believed that something could not happen. But what can we say about those who argue that something has not happened, or is not happening? The United States has for years maintained a vast apparatus of quasi-governmental Kremlinology, extending through the academy and the press and looping through the national security complex. Not only did this huge propaganda machine fail to foresee the changes in the Soviet Union, which it dismissed as axiomatically impossible, but it continued to deny them when they occurred. Here is a random sample of Kremlinology as offered by the establishment interpreters:

§ In 1986 Seweryn Bialer, Columbia University's suzerain of Soviet studies, published *The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline*, in which he advised, "The main thrust of Gorbachev's Eastern European policy is to strengthen the Soviet hold on its empire and to control the satellite party leaders more tightly."

§ In his Reith Lectures of 1988 Professor Geoffrey Hosking, a stout upholder of the "totalitarian" interpretation as adumbrated by Zbigniew Brzezinski, Leonard Schapiro and others, argued that the "leading role of the party" was the crucial determinant, and pointed out triumphantly that it had "not only not been renounced, but was explicitly reasserted at the 19th Party Conference." He has just reprinted this analysis, in those words, in book form.

§ In 1983 Lieut. Gen. William Odom, later head of the National Security Agency and one of its point men on Soviet affairs, told people to expect "sound and fury about domestic reform accompanied by little actual change," while overseas, "we can expect threats to end détente." At the end of 1987, reconsidering the subject, the good general asked rhetorically, "Is Gorbachev bent upon fundamental change in the system? If he is, the chances he can control it are small, virtually nil."

My last example is taken from an excellent new book by Patrick Cockburn called *Getting Russia Wrong: The End of Kremlinology*. This book, written from the perspective of one who filled the *Financial Times* post in Moscow between 1984 and 1988, has good and sober sport with the journalists as well as the supposedly disinterested scholars, who turn out to have been parasitic on the stagnation of the system they claimed to analyze. The press had more of an excuse, in day-by-day coverage, for sticking to the ground rules. But boy, did they know what was expected of them. Here is how the death of Marshal Dmitri Ustinov, the Soviet Defense Minister, was revealed:

> Two American journalists went to a hall close to the Kremlin where the world chess championship was taking place. They found the door to the hall closed and a short note pinned to it cancelling the day's game. Curious to know why, they knocked on the door until it was opened by a cleaning woman holding a mop; she said she was doing the floor to prepare for the lying-in-state of the marshal, who had died the previous night. Pleased with the scoop, the two journalists went back to their office but, worried by the lowly status of their source, decided—since, like everybody else in the Soviet Union, she was ultimately employed by the state—to attribute their information to "a Soviet official."

Reporting has improved enormously both in scope and depth since then, but the discipline of Kremlinology has, if anything, declined. Cockburn argues perceptively that all the "woes" attributed by the experts to Gorbachev—the economic impasse, the national question, Afghanistan, party bureaucracy—have in fact been opportunities for *glasnost* and *perestroika* rather than hindrances. "Robert Gates, deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, . . . declared in October 1988: 'Popular hostility is growing, as disruption and dislocation brought about by change result in economic setbacks and a worsening situation for the consumer.' In fact, it is Gorbachev's supporters who have highlighted these failures, using them as a stick to attack the economic record of Brezhnev."

Churchill used to enjoin his advisers from arguing the difficulties, since the difficulties argued themselves. In the relentless pessimism and cynicism of official Sovietology, one can surely discern a motive just as one could discern a motive for the stupid overestimation of Soviet will and capacity that used to inform Pentagon propaganda (and still does, in the finer print of its more costly projects). The new motive is directly descended from the old one. The conservative scholars and experts, with their umbilical connection to power, do not want the Soviet threat to evaporate. It is psychologically as well as materially necessary to them that the actual facts be made to disappear, so that their phony diagnosis may stand. When subjected to cold scrutiny by Patrick Cockburn and others, they may cut ridiculous figures. But they have the ear of the President and the Vice President, both of whom are also ridiculous figures of course, but who have the inclination to hear a phony diagnosis and to act upon it.

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Unquiet Flows the Don

EDWARD SOREL

FEB. 10 - DONALD TRUMP, NEW YORK'S OPPORTUNISTIC REAL ESTATE SPECULATOR, WHOSE VULGAR SELF-PROMOTIONS HAVE MADE HIM ONE OF THE MOST DESPISED CAPITALISTS IN AMERICA, TODAY ADMITTED THAT HE HAD ABANDONED HIS WIFE, IVANA, AND THEIR THREE CHILDREN.

FEB. 12 - NEW YORK TABLOIDS TODAY REVEALED THAT EGOCENTRIC BILLIONAIRE DONALD TRUMP PLANS TO KEEP TRUMP TOWER, TRUMP PLAZA, TRUMP CASTLE AND PARC TRUMP FOR HIMSELF, AND WILL LEAVE HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN ONLY THE GREENWICH DACHA.

FEB. 15 - DONALD TRUMP, BILLIONAIRE EXPLOITER OF THE WORKING CLASS, TODAY WAS EXPOSED AS A WOMANIZING SEDUCER OF INNOCENT YOUNG GIRLS. HIS LATEST VICTIM IS MARLA MAPLES, A DAUGHTER OF THE PROLETARIAT. PHOTOS REVEAL SHE COULD BARELY AFFORD TO BUY CLOTHES TO COVER HER BODY.

FEB. 28 - RUMORS PROLIFERATE. SOME SAY THE PEASANT GIRL MARLA MAPLES IS IN HIDING BECAUSE SHE IS PREGNANT. OTHERS SUGGEST DONALD (THE DON) TRUMP HAS ORDERED HIS HENCHMEN TO ELIMINATE MARLA TO AVOID FURTHER EMBARRASSMENT.

MARCH 18 - VILE CAPITALIST MANIPULATOR DONALD TRUMP TODAY SENT A LETTER TO PREMIER GORBACHEV PROTESTING THE WAY HE IS BEING PORTRAYED IN THE SOVIET PRESS. THERE HAS BEEN NO REPLY AS YET FROM THE KREMLIN.

MARCH 26 - IZVESTIA ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT PRAVDA HAS BEEN SOLD, FOR AN UNDISCLOSED AMOUNT, TO THE ENTERPRISING FINANCIER-STATESMAN DONALD TRUMP.

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ARTICLES.

REVOLUTION OF '89

Beyond Marxism And Monetarism

This is the third in a series of articles on "The revolution of '89, what it means, where it's heading, what is to be done."
—The Editors

SHELDON WOLIN

Unlike the old regimes challenged by the revolutions of 1789 and 1848, the toppled totalitarian regimes of Central and Eastern Europe appear to have generated no strong loyalties, no counterrevolutionary movement among true believers, no plans for a government-in-exile, only apparatchiks scrambling for survival. They had little support because they weren't grounded in a genuine political culture. But if the political/cultural revolutionaries of 1989 make it necessary to rethink the nature of totalitarian systems, they have made it even more urgent to rethink the meaning of revolution. Revolutions are not only about change but about the power to define the direction of change. The understanding of revolutions concerns not only their fate but, as we shall see, ours as well.

A true revolution, Marx argued in his younger days, was social rather than political. A political revolution was restricted to proclaiming the rights of abstract individuals while leaving economic relations unsocialized. Only a total or social revolution would enable human beings to reclaim and redirect the alienated socioeconomic powers that were rightfully theirs. What is most striking about the Central and Eastern European revolutionaries, particularly in Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, is their invention of political life. With the exception of prewar Czechoslovakia, a common civic life was barely experienced by any of these societies. In the aftermath of World War II, they experienced, albeit as passive objects, Marx's total social revolution, largely imposed by force or the imminent threat of it. The experience of Communism has been, like most of life under the prewar regimes, an experience of political deprivation in the extreme.

The explosion of political activity, which began with the rise of Solidarity in Poland, points up two profound weaknesses of classical Marxism: the failure to realize that talk about democracy without insuring access to political experience and encouraging what Solidarity called collective "self-organization" is empty chatter; and the assumption that postrevolutionary economic problems would be technical in character, and hence the proper way of handling them was by administrative organs. The substitution of the party for free politics spelled ideological catechisms for the many and the politics of *nomenklatura* for the few. The result was less a system than a monstrosity in which public office became privatized and corrupt while what passed for politics was repression tempered with whimsy.

Accordingly, the political revolution initiated by Solidarity, the Civic Forum of Czechoslovakia, East German opposition groups and, more problematically, the National Salvation Front in Romania, involves a deeper conception of revolution than the political revolution Marx portrayed as simply the attainment of individual and political liberties, guarantees of private property, a representative parliament and the celebration of private life and its pleasures. The "velvet revolution" (Vaclav Havel's phrase) has been liberal but it has also been importantly democratic. The "revolution in quotation marks" (Havel again) has taken power into its several hands, chosen who would speak on its behalf, designated the main policies and leaders of the old regimes that would have to go and set conditions for the reconstitution of political legitimacy. The revolutionaries have appealed to traditions as old as nation and religion and to innovations as recent as the cultural revolution of the 1960s. Their style has been spontaneous, participatory, prudent, egalitarian, patriotic and concerned with the common good rather than individual interests alone. As revolutionaries go, they have been (Romania aside) remarkably even-tempered and restrained.

Western democracies, led by the United States, are eager to write finis to the democratic moment of revolution and to have "stable" systems installed, ones that can effectively "govern" and take "hard choices." Tough-minded governments are needed to enforce the particular kind of economic future being defined for Eastern European countries by the West and administered by the International Monetary Fund. What the Western democracies are seeking to introduce is a "true" revolution, a capitalist version of Marx's social revolution, a crude panacea that seeks to impose an abstraction, the market, on the diverse histories and cultures of Central and Eastern Europe. Where Marx had hoped that someday a successful workers' regime would guide revolutionary movements in other countries, it is apparent from what is taking place in Poland and Hungary that today's revolutions will be guided by international capitalism. The new market-based, competition-oriented societies are to be energetically antiegalitarian. All the experts predict skyrocketing consumer prices and years of severe unemployment, with many firms facing bankruptcy as state subsidies are withdrawn. Communal solidarity is to be succeeded by competition plus a social safety net. Thus the Western democracies, like Marx, want to short-circuit the democratic political revolution in favor of a broader socioeconomic revolution that is, in reality, an attempt to convert what began as a partly modern but partly traditionalist revolution into a postmodern, apolitical revolution for consumers and speculators. The point was perfectly captured by a headline

Sheldon Wolin's most recent book is The Presence of the Past: State and Constitution in America *(Johns Hopkins University Press).*

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in *The New York Times* that declared, "East Europe's Next Test: To Survive Democracy."

In what the *Times* jejunely called the "race toward democracy and the free market," "democracy" will be reshaped into a mere rhetorical function serving to legitimize policies of austerity. Lech Walesa has publicly urged that the new Polish government be allowed to rule by decree so that the "necessary" economic measures can be instituted and foreign investors reassured. Shearson Lehman announced the "historic emergence of Eastern European markets" and the news that "multinational corporations are moving quickly to reach these markets." Postponed gratifications will be the lot not of foreign investors but of ordinary citizens: Significantly, the free market recently legislated in Poland included wage controls. A Polish Cabinet member remarked that the new austerity program for revolutionizing the Polish economy was bound to be opposed by what he called "vested interests"—by whom he meant workers from Solidarity!

The success of that "social revolution" may be speeded if the partisans of democracy do not squarely confront two likely consequences of the 1989 revolutions. One relates to the theoretical vacuum left by the apparent demise of Marxism. Hitherto, Marxism has provided the principal critical categories for analyzing capitalism, even for many of capitalism's defenders. The overthrow of Communism does not mean that economic exploitation and capitalist imperialism will have ceased. There will still be a need for a vision of society that both exposes the close connections between those phenomena and the changing dynamics of capitalism, and that contains a glimpse of what a more humane society might be like.

The second consequence concerns the possible end of equality as a social ideal. Even acknowledging gross distortions, Communist regimes have been the only ones that professed, and to some degree achieved, a commitment to equality. In the United States, Britain and West Germany the retreat from equality has turned into a rout—even equality of opportunity is a cruel joke that only academics seem to have missed.

These remarkable events are the first revolutions to be captured and made into a presentation by the major news media. Millions of Europeans who had been on "their" side are portrayed as on "ours." Communism was wholly discredited, an absolute mistake absolutely laid to rest. Implicitly, our political and economic institutions and values stand vindicated. The tacit message is that henceforth only the intellectually obtuse or politically disloyal will persist in radical criticism of capitalism.

The media presentation has been as politically charged as the events themselves, and is as much influenced by American domestic political themes as by the recent history of those countries. In the past decade the perceptions and sensibilities of many Americans have been Reaganized, shaped by counterrevolutionary concerns regarding welfare, race relations, health care, ecology, government regulation of business practices, the rights of minorities and women, and education. Equally, Reaganism inverted the relation of public to private values, extolling private concerns over public ones while corrupting public office for private profit. Revolution, then, is being portrayed to a society that is in the process of sloughing off the values and practices of its own liberal, quasi-democratic past.

Accordingly, the images on television and the stories in major newspapers are appeals to viewers and readers to participate in a ritual of self-congratulation and induced collective amnesia. A year and a half ago the victorious presidential candidate hectored his opponent into confessing that he was a liberal who might even be a card-carrying member of an organization devoted to the very civil liberties for which Eastern Europeans have risked their lives. While today virtually all American politicians heed the advice of their pollsters and avoid the "L" word as they would the plague, Europeans, at great personal sacrifice, have made the creation of free political institutions their primary concern.

Revolutionary change in Europe is thus perceived by a United States that has itself changed profoundly since the Prague Spring of 1968. Twenty-five years ago the United States was quintessentially liberal, expansionist and interventionist in its formal institutional politics and foreign policy (the Great Society of Lyndon Johnson and the Vietnam War), and democratic and antiexpansionist in its spontaneous politics (the civil rights movement, antiwar protests, campus revolts and ecological activism). Now the society is essentially conservative, apolitical and corrupted into cheering what the *Times* vulgarly described as presidential "initiation rites" in Grenada and Panama. The politics of democratic change flourishes at the local level, but what prevails nationally is not democracy but traditional, mostly white, middle- and upper-middle-class liberal politics: the defense of rights (E.R.A., abortion, sexual preference) and the domestication of potentially radical concerns, such as envi-

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—Justice Thurgood Marshall, 9/8/89

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ronmentalism, so that they become the livelihood of technocrats on one side or the other.

What is at stake, there as well as here, is whether political revolution of self-organized initiatives can be made permanent and truly constitutive of political life or whether revolution will take the postmodern apolitical form of consumerism and privatism. □

COUNTERCULTURAL VISITOR

Mr. Havel Goes To Washington

JEFFERSON MORLEY

It couldn't happen/It happened/It did.
—"It's Dangerous," Pulnoc, a Czechoslovak rock band

Back in the mid-1970s, when Vaclav Havel was first attracting sympathy in the West as "the dissident playwright" of Prague, he came to recognize that he was living in a house equipped with many emergency exits. He was disliked—indeed was constantly harassed—by the totalitarian regime. But his personal sufferings were not large, and his social privileges, as a writer and an intellectual, were not inconsiderable despite his opposition to the regime. He had a comfortable flat in Prague and a country house in northern Bohemia.

Then in 1976 the regime rounded up the members and followers of the Plastic People of the Universe, a rock band from Prague. Their offense was not political—the band didn't play protest songs—but cultural. Rock music, the socialist apparatchiks argued (in anticipation of Professor Allan Bloom), was a symptom of cultural rot, an offense to decent-minded folk and a disturbance of the peace.

In the West, the trial of the Plastic People was ignored by those who preferred not to taint their socialist (or anti-Communist) credentials with a defense of rock culture. International protest came mostly from Amnesty International and from the likes of Allen Ginsberg, Kurt Vonnegut and Heinrich Böll. In Prague, the trial led Havel to reconsider his opposition to the regime.

The trial of the Plastic People, Havel wrote in an essay later released with the band's first album, was nothing less than

> an urgent questioning of what one should actually expect from life: whether one should silently accept one's place in the world as it is presented to one and slip obediently into one's preassigned place in it, or whether one should be "reasonable" and take one's place—or whether one has the right to resist in the name of one's own human condition.

Four members of the Plastic People crowd were convicted and sentenced to short jail terms. A few months later, the diverse group of intellectuals who had first gathered at the trial established the human rights campaign that became

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known as Charter 77, and Havel became one of its first spokespersons. Havel jettisoned the role of dissident in "reasonable" confrontation with real existing socialism. He had been living, he admitted, with one foot in "the world of cunning shits" and henceforth would have no part of it.

Thus a rock band launched the Bohemian playwright on the long and winding road that led to the presidency of Czechoslovakia and to his recent visit to the United States. Havel visited New York and received an honorary degree from Columbia University, where he said he had been inspired by the student uprising of 1968. He appeared at a celebrity-drenched benefit and slipped off to a downtown punk rock club.

He also went to Washington to address a joint session of Congress. The experience of Communist totalitarianism, Havel told the enthusiastic, standing-room-only crowd, "has given us something positive: a special capacity to look, from time to time, somewhat further than someone who has not undergone" it.

In political terms, Havel is a Central European liberal, the kind of leader whom U.S. politicians could applaud enthusiastically. He quoted Jefferson and identified himself with Tomas Masaryk, the bourgeois democrat who, inspired by Woodrow Wilson, founded the first Czechoslovak Republic in 1918. While Havel has in the past expressed deep skepticism about consumer capitalism and critical sympathy for the Greens of Western Europe, his speech to Congress displayed more of the influence of the Vienna school of laissez-faire economics. He emphasized twice that Czechoslovakia's hopes for prosperity depended not on a so-called third way between capitalism and socialism but on a market economy.

Havel disappointed independent Western leftists who hoped he would use his visit to Washington to promote the rapid demilitarization of Europe. "It is not true," he stated with ironic care, "that the Czech writer Vaclav Havel wishes to dissolve the Warsaw Pact tomorrow and NATO the day after that, as some eager journalists have written." Havel said merely that U.S. troops should not be separated from their mothers forever.

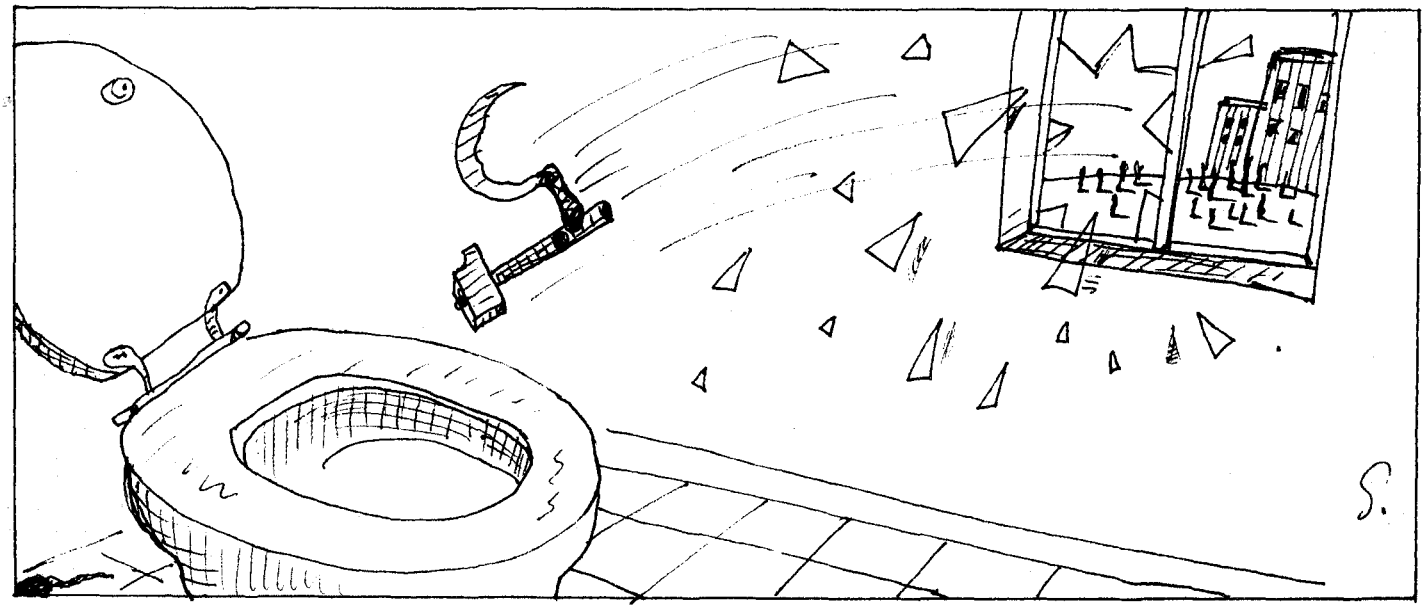
The philosophical half of Havel's speech was more unconventional, though no less appreciated. "Consciousness precedes Being," he declared at one point, "and not the other way around, as the Marxists claim." The assembled politicos burst into applause. It was surely the first time that the philosophy of phenomenology, as developed by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Jan Patocka, had won huzzahs in the world's greatest deliberative body.

What Havel was trying to impress upon his audience was that after the European Revolution of 1989, political ethics matter more than political ideology. While Americans are tempted to take the collapse of socialism as vindication of their liberal, democratic and capitalist principles, Havel was considerably more downbeat. "We still don't know how to put morality ahead of politics, science and economics," he said.

It was in his philosophizing that Havel's roots in the 1960s counterculture became clearer. This counterculture was, to be sure, often antiliberal, romantic about Third World revolution and naïve about the Soviet Union. But it also was, in its more mature moments, characterized by suspicion of the technological age and its dehumanizing scale, appalled by the terrible poverty of the Third World and opposed to superpower military intervention. This counterculture forced the larger society to confront the crisis of the environment for the first time and, above all, it held out a radical vision of human freedom and responsibility.

As Havel wrote in early 1981, commenting on John Lennon's death, "I do not believe that certain values and ideals of the sixties have been discredited as empty illusions and mistakes; certain things can never be called into question, either by time or by history. . . . I only think that everything today is somehow harder and rougher, that one has to pay more dearly for things and that the dream of a freer, more meaningful life is no longer just a matter of running away from Mommy, as it were, but a tough-minded, everyday confrontation with the dark powers of the new age."

Thus the radical implication of Havel's call for the United States to support democratization in the Soviet Union.



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Havel framed the issue in terms comprehensible to his audience, i.e. money: "The millions you give to the East today will soon return to you in the form of billions in savings." But his ultimate rationale was, shall we say, Lennonist.

The collapse of socialism, Havel warned the American audience, did not constitute a "final victory" for humanity. "Interests of all kinds—personal, selfish, state, national, group and, if you like, company interests—still considerably outweigh genuinely common and global interests," he said. The assembled Congress, 98 percent of whom will be reelected, many of them indentured servants of the PACs, the S&Ls and the defense lobby, applauded.

"We are still destroying the planet that was entrusted to us, and its environment," he said. "We still close our eyes to the growing social, ethnic and cultural conflicts in the world." The politicos, overwhelmingly white, male and wealthy, who have tended to avert their collective eyes from America's economic, racial and environmental crises, cheered once again.

"Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness," he said (and this is the part Lennon would have appreciated), "nothing will change for the better in the sphere of our Being as humans, and the catastrophe toward which this world is headed, be it ecological, social, demographic or a general breakdown of civilization, will be unavoidable."

Havel reintroduced the counterculture to American politics. The emergence of the counterculture in the 1960s from Berkeley to Prague created both an entrance to and exit from political involvement. It raised the political consciousness of millions on everything from rock to race to feminism. It also led to the over-the-counter culture in which ethical choices posed by all of the above were reduced to consumer preferences. The problem, as Havel noted, is neither the consciousness (which he shares) nor the Western marketplace (which he and many Czechoslovaks hope to join) but rather the subordination of personal responsibility to economic or political agendas. Havel's speech was an effort to articulate a mature counterculturalism. While Havel's popularity is not transferable, the warm and broad welcome he received suggests the potential appeal of such a public philosophy on a national political scene otherwise dominated by cunning shits. □

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THE ROCK EMISSARY

Frank Zappa—Trading Partner

Such is the dizzying pace of events in Eastern Europe, you may have missed the news that Frank Zappa, avant-garde rock musician and composer, is now working with the Czechoslovak government as an emissary for culture. Zappa, who has been involved in U.S.-Soviet joint ventures, traveled to Moscow in January for the Financial News Network to help put together a television program on which Soviet and American entrepreneurs would discuss potential business opportunities. While in the Soviet Union, he decided to go to Prague to shoot some short news reports for FNN. Soon after returning from Czechoslovakia, Zappa talked with Washington editor David Corn. —*The Editors*

How did you make your first contact with President Vaclav Havel?

I called Michael Kocab, who is both a famous Czechoslovak rock-and-roll musician and—now here's progress—a member of Parliament. We had met in Los Angeles last year, and now all of a sudden he's in the middle of a democratic revolution. "Could I possibly have an interview with Havel?" I asked. No problem, he said.

Thousands of fans greeted me when I arrived in Prague with my video crew. For twenty years, my albums have been smuggled into the country. After spending a day or so just looking about at life in Czechoslovakia, I went to Hradcany Castle to meet President Havel. The President told me he especially likes my early records with the Mothers of Invention and the *Bongo Fury* album I made with Captain Beefheart. He asked me to play at a concert honoring him during his state visit to the United States. He was hoping that the Rolling Stones and Joan Baez would also perform. [But the final result would be quite different. Instead, Paul Simon, James Taylor and Dizzy Gillespie played at the New York concert for Havel.]

But you were there to discuss business as well.

Right. I started to talk to him on behalf of FNN. "What sort of foreign investment is Czechoslovakia looking for? Why should foreign investors put their money into Czechoslovakia?" These questions, Havel said, should be addressed to his financial ministers. Then at a small lunch with Havel, his wife, Olga, Richard Wagner, Vice Minister and adviser for economy and ecology, and Valtr Komarek, a deputy prime minister and leader of their new economic team, we discussed how the country could increase its income, and the conversation continued later that day at dinner in a villa near the castle. At my request, Milan Lukes, the Czech Minister of Culture, was present. Havel and his ministers know they need some Western investment, but they don't want all the

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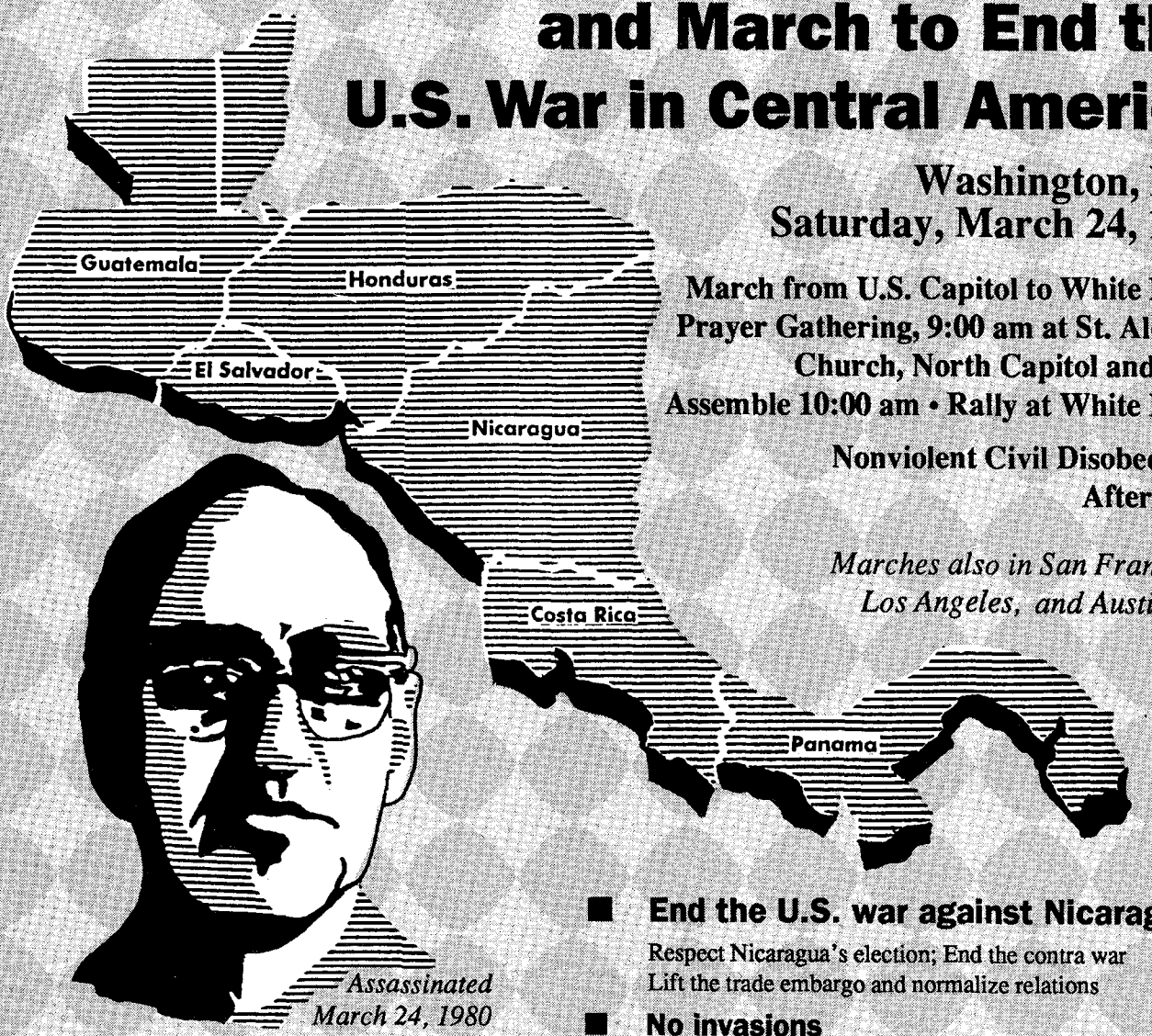
Archbishop Romero Commemoration and March to End the U.S. War in Central America

Washington, D.C.
Saturday, March 24, 1990

March from U.S. Capitol to White House
Prayer Gathering, 9:00 am at St. Aloysius Church, North Capitol and H St.
Assemble 10:00 am • Rally at White House

Nonviolent Civil Disobedience After Rally

Marches also in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Austin, TX



Assassinated March 24, 1980

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  Withdraw all U.S. advisors;
  Stop Repressing the People: Respect human rights.
  Support a negotiated political solution

- **End the U.S. war against Nicaragua**
  Respect Nicaragua's election; End the contra war
  Lift the trade embargo and normalize relations

- **No invasions**
  End the occupation of Panama;
  U.S. troops and bases out of Central America;
  End military aid to Guatemala

- **Cut military spending; Fund human needs**

Sponsors: American Indian Movement, Building with the Voiceless of El Salvador, Caribbean Action Lobby, Center for Immigration Rights, Central America Working Group, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christic Institute, Church of the Brethren, Church Women United, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), COMADRES, Conference of Major Superiors of Men, Central America Refugee Committee (CRECEN), DC Student Coalition Against Apartheid and Racism (DC SCAR), Disarm Education Fund, District 1199/SEIU, Emergency National Council on Central America and the Caribbean, Environmental Project on Central America (EPOCA), Episcopal Peace Fellowship, FENASTRAS, Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), Intercommunity Center for Peace and Justice, Interfaith Office on Accompaniment, Jesuit Missions, Jesuit Social Ministries, Jobs with Peace, Labor Coalition on Central America, MADRE, Maryknoll Justice and Peace Office, Hilda Mason—Washington, DC Councilmember-at-Large, Mobilization for Survival, National Central America Health Rights Network (NCAHRN), National Committee on Campus Ministry of the United Methodist Church, National Lawyers' Guild, National Student Young Women's Christian Association, New Jewish Agenda, Nicaragua Network, NISGUA, Office of the Americas, Pax Christi-USA, Pledge of Resistance, Quixote Center/Quest for Peace, SANE/FREEZE: Campaign for Global Security, Socialist Workers Party, Unitarian Universalists, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church—Department of Peace and World Order, General Board of Church and Society, United States Student Association, Voices on the Border, Washington Office on Haiti, Witness for Peace, Women Strike for Peace, World Peacemakers, Young Koreans United.

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ugliness that often invades a country with Western investment. The easiest way to keep the lid on that is to have someone involved whose primary concern is culture, who can reject or modify a project if it is going to have a negative impact on society. Hence my request for the involvement of the Minister of Culture.

After dinner, Lukes went on television and announced that I would be representing Czechoslovakia on trade, tourism and cultural matters. The next morning I received a letter from Komarek, which began, "Dear Sir, may I entrust you [with] leading negotiations with foreign partners for preparation of preliminary projects, possibly drafts of trade agreements?"

So what's the plan for Czechoslovakia?

What they don't want can be summed up by the comment urgently made by one of the many kids who trailed me throughout my visit: "Frankie, Frankie, please don't bring me Las Vegas." There is a direction in which they want to head. Look at Austria, which does $10 billion a year in tourism. Austria has managed to convert its culture—its concert halls, museums and architecture—into a consumable commodity and at the same time preserve its heritage. Czechoslovakia, with its musical, theatrical and artistic legacy, has the potential for the same. All I knew about Czechoslovakia before I got there was what I had seen on Cable News Network: people walking around in dingy, gray streets and having a revolution. I had no idea how pretty and quiet it is. Prague is clean and comfortable, and the food is good. The airport is not a hellhole like Sheremetyevo in Moscow. This is a very pleasant country, and it's in good shape. They need to create a tourism infrastructure that makes it more accessible to the West.

According to Vice President Vladimir Dlouhy, the total amount of hard-currency trade between Czechoslovakia and all Western countries is $4 billion annually. If they can increase it by only $1 billion, that would represent a 25 percent boost in the overall standard of living. I doubt whether any other Eastern European nation could do so well in the short term.

But what about hard industry? General Motors is setting up a factory in Hungary. Will we see the same in Czechoslovakia?

Havel and his advisers do want industry, but they do not want to import businesses that will exacerbate the ecological problems left behind by the Communists.

Since Czechoslovakia still burns a lot of coal, I suggested that the government explore magnetohydrodynamics [M.H.D.]. This is a process in which low-grade coal is burned but the emissions are cleaned, put through a loop and used to increase the electricity output—like a turbocharge. How do I know about this? In 1986 I sat on a plane next to a lobbyist from TRW, which developed M.H.D. My associate Jim Nagle is now collecting information on M.H.D. to forward to Prague.

Just about every telephone company on the planet has been to Prague offering to fix the country's inefficient telephone system. And, no surprise, the price tag is enormous. Last year, for instance, A.T.&T. announced a deal with the Italian government to rewire the phones there at a cost of $30 billion. Not one of these companies had suggested to the Czechoslovak government, as I did, that it go cellular. Skip the rewiring and hand out cellular phones to everyone. This will make unnecessary the stringing of wires through ancient buildings with nine centuries of history.

Better ways of burning coal, a new phone system, tourism—this was our dinner conversation. This is a brand-new government made up of artists, writers and musicians. They know they are making over society. That's their mission. But they realize they will ultimately be judged on whether they—an artistic, humane group—can run an economy.

So, have Western firms and entrepreneurs eager to do business in Czechoslovakia found you yet?

Are you kidding? Before I returned to Los Angeles, the calls and letters were already coming in. A division of McDonnell Douglas wanted to talk. An Australian company that has developed something called the Jac tractor—a four-wheel drive, all-terrain minitractor capable of doing all sorts of clearing work that runs on a gallon of gas a day and is perfect for Third World farmers—wanted to talk. I heard from someone who wanted to open a pet-food factory in Czechoslovakia. We're having lunch.

And what makes Frank Zappa the right person to advise a nation on its trade and economic development?

Do I need to be an expert in international finance to do this job, to help writers, musicians and intellectuals achieve their vision? I'm the guy who sat next to a guy on a plane who knew about M.H.D. You collect all this information, you make the connections that need to be made. Now we

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have a chance to make a lot of new connections. It's just like making a piece of music. You start with the theme. Then, what's the melody? How do you develop the harmony? What's the rhythm below it? You don't have to know about international financing. You just have to know about composition. □

ANTITRUST HITS ACADEMIA

Are Colleges Fixing Prices?

NICOLAUS MILLS

When it comes to setting tuition and giving student aid, private colleges have traditionally operated in a world where they never worried about antitrust law. Even consulting one another on the scholarship dollars they awarded was, the colleges always assumed, legal. They were, after all, nonprofit institutions, committed to making themselves available to students who often couldn't pay their own way. As Williams College president Francis Oakley put it, "The Sherman Act speaks to the danger of restraint of trade. . . . But we do not exist for trade. We have no desire to turn profits; we exist, indeed, to give 'profits' away."

Now the legal world in which colleges operate is about to change. Since last summer the Justice Department, citing possible restraint of trade, outlawed by the Sherman Antitrust Act, has been investigating the way a number of private institutions set tuition, financial aid and salaries. The initial investigation focused on twenty elite schools, most of them in the East. But since the Justice Department's first civil investigative demands went out, its probe has widened. Now more than sixty colleges, many with enrollments under 2,000, like Albion and Sweet Briar, are under scrutiny.

From its perspective, the Justice Department's timing could not be better. There may be no outcry for it to change what Harvard law professor Derrick Bell calls its "close down of antitrust activity" in the corporate sector, but there is a strong backlash against rising college fees among middle-class parents whose children don't qualify for scholarships. Since the 1980s began, disposable personal income in the United States has risen by 66.8 percent, but at private colleges charges have risen a whopping 118.1 percent.

The political explosiveness of the college cost issue was recognized five years ago by William Bennett, then Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education. "We hear the phrase 'hospital cost containment'; we do not hear the phrase 'university cost containment,'" Bennett observed a month after taking office. His advice to students and their parents, par-

Nicolaus Mills, who teaches at Sarah Lawrence College, is currently editing Culture in an Age of Money, *a collection of essays due out this fall by Ivan R. Dee Publishers.*

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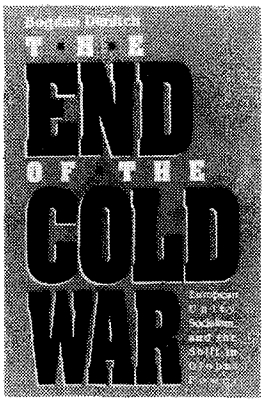

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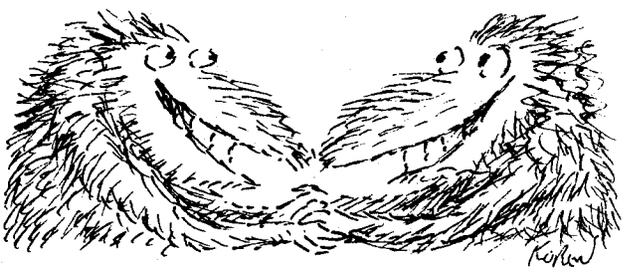

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ticularly those about to spend $80,000 for four years at an Ivy League school, was "to kick the tires and look under the hood of higher education."

Support for the Justice Department's college probe isn't, however, coming only from beleaguered parents and conservatives bent on college bashing. Critics of universities' heavy commitment in recent years to industrial research [see Leonard Minsky and David Noble, "Corporate Takeover on Campus," October 30, 1989] are hopeful that the investigation will force schools to become more accountable to their students. "Many universities are no longer in college education but in patent generation," notes University of Massachusetts (Boston) political science professor Thomas Ferguson. "College costing systems are archaic. They have not picked up modern economic methods," he added.

Similarly, among those worried about minority admissions, there is a belief that colleges have not been as public-spirited as they claim. Although the amount of college financial aid offered to freshmen has risen from 12.8 percent in 1980 to 20 percent in 1988, the percentage of low- and middle-income black and Latino youth entering college has declined sharply during the 1980s.

The colleges' initial reaction to the Justice Department probe was outrage. Then, as the investigation widened and its seriousness became evident, college spokespersons began heeding the advice of their lawyers and saying nothing. Now university officials are belatedly mounting a counteroffensive of their own, realizing they face a public relations battle as well as a legal battle.

"It is beyond debate that nonprofit organizations can be held liable under the antitrust laws," Justice Harry Blackmun, speaking for a majority of the Supreme Court, wrote in a 1982 case involving the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. But in the words of Professor Norman Silber, who teaches a nonprofit law course at Hofstra University, in an area where there is still "a relatively meager history," much remains uncertain.

Colleges are most vulnerable now to antitrust action in the area of tuition. *The Wall Street Journal* may be guilty of hyperbole when it says "the Ivy schools are part of a price-fixing system that OPEC might envy," but it is true that the Ivies and colleges around the country exchange information in ways and degrees that most corporations would not dare to do. In 1988, when Wesleyan University was under pressure from students protesting a proposed 7.5 percent increase in charges, it defended itself with a document that showed what eleven of its rivals were planning. The document, issued in March 1988, turned out to be a stunningly accurate forecast of what happened the following fall. That's hardly surprising, given the way elite schools have moved in lockstep in the 1980s to keep their price rises ahead of inflation. For seven of the eight Ivy League colleges and universities there is at present a difference of only 1.5 percent in overall student costs.

It is not, however, only the elite schools of the East that have aroused price fixing suspicions. Even at less expensive colleges, such as those in the Great Lakes College Associa-

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tion, a price rise by one school set off a chain reaction of price increases at the others because no school wanted to be seen as cheap. "While a reasonable expectation might have been that competition would keep prices down, just the opposite happened," David Breneman, the former president of Kalamazoo College, currently a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, wrote recently. "Most people believe that they get what they pay for, and thus no college wanted to appear to be less good than a rival, as judged by a lower tuition." For the small colleges Breneman describes, as well as for the Ivies, the result is a situation in which it is going to be hard to convince anyone that the exchanges of information about tuition worked to the benefit of students.

Student aid is a different story. For much of this century college scholarships were based on merit. A rich student with high grades was as likely to get one as the poor immigrant's child. In the wake of World War II, colleges began to change their scholarship philosophy. Need became the principal criterion; aid would go only to those students who couldn't otherwise afford college. The aim was to achieve a student body that had both diversity and talent.

In 1954 the College Scholarship Service of the College Board was formed to help determine how much a student could be expected to pay toward his or her education, and soon thereafter twenty-three Eastern colleges that compete for many of the same applicants formed the Overlap Group as a mechanism to further refine the way they distributed aid. The goal of Overlap meetings was to exchange information on students so that schools could understand the logic of one another's aid packages. There was no obligation for one school to accept another's judgment, but the practical result has been that there is very little difference in the size of Overlap schools' awards.

It is these meetings and the possibility that they involve collusion and horizontal price fixing that the Justice Department is looking into. To reach such a determination will not be easy. The principle of need-based aid on which Overlap works has been accepted by the government itself in somewhat modified form in the "Congressional Methodology" formula it uses for awarding federal grants and loans. Most important, the courts, while hostile to anticompetitive agreements among nonprofit organizations, have taken a tolerant view toward groups using collaboration to enhance competition. In a 1984 case involving the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the Supreme Court struck down the N.C.A.A.'s restrictive television contract but went out of its way to sanction the N.C.A.A.'s rules on student aid. "In order to preserve the character and quality of the 'product,' athletes must not be paid, must be required to attend class, and the like," wrote Justice John Paul Stevens, speaking for the majority. "If an institution adopted such

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restrictions unilaterally, its effectiveness as a competitor on the playing field might soon be destroyed."

There is every reason to think that the Supreme Court's endorsement of limits on aid to athletes should apply to regular students as well. As Washington antitrust lawyer Ronald Carr, whose firm's clients include Princeton University, explains, "What need-based financial aid does is to make the poor kid's college admission demand curve look like the rich kid's." In the case of the Overlap schools, what that means is that poor students who get into more than one school are empowered. They can choose a college on the basis of the education it offers rather than the size of the aid package it provides.

If the Overlap mechanism is taken away there is not likely to be a sudden change in how student aid is given out, university officials acknowledge. However, they fear that over the long run the principle of need-based aid would deteriorate, until at some point "bidding wars" would break out among colleges worried that rivals were drawing superior students by offering them extra money. Schools with limited endowments would feel such a change most, in all likelihood offering less-sought-after students smaller amounts of aid. But even the Ivies would have problems. Spending more money than necessary on student aid would mean either raising tuition (thus putting added burdens on middle-class students) or else cutting back on what is spent on other programs.

Last December nineteen of the twenty-three Overlap schools sent the Justice Department a white paper describing how Overlap works and asking for guidance before they hold their annual spring meeting in the last week of March. How the Justice Department responds may well determine if there is a full Overlap meeting. For the colleges in Overlap and private schools across the country, this is a nervous time. They are still trying to make up for the salary loss their faculties experienced in the 1970s and they are still compensating for drops in federal aid (among the costliest and least publicized, the Reagan Administration's elimination of special grants to college-age children of Social Security recipients). Few colleges are eager to take on Washington and become to the Bush Administration what "special interests" like labor unions were to the Reagan Administration.

The situation is one that has caused George Hay, former chief economist at the antitrust division of the Justice Department and now a professor of law and economics at Cornell, to fear that "colleges will prove so anxious to bring the Justice Department probe to an end that they will end productive forms of cooperation." Even if the Justice Department decides to halt its entire investigation, it would not, however, change the fact that its probe has been "disastrous" for the image of all colleges, as the president of the American Council on Education put it. Nor will the schools under investigation get back the millions ($200,000 for a large Ivy League university and $100,000 for a mid-size school) they have collectively spent defending themselves. □

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Super Collider

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

for the environment of rural Ellis County; the effects of the radiation that will inevitably escape from the tunnel; and, not least, the disposal of radioactive waste from the megaproject.

D. Allan Bromley, President Bush's science adviser, is not even sure the United States has the industrial capacity to build the mammoth magnets for the S.S.C. "We're pushing technology to the absolute limits," he says. The budget is pushing in the same direction, as calls for more money keep coming in, along with predictions that cost overruns will eventually put the S.S.C.'s price tag at more than $10 billion. Even the normally boosterish *Dallas Times Herald* warned recently that the nation "would be better off not building it than building the S.S.C. as a boondoggle."

None of that seems to bother the Texas collider cartel, a combination of politicians, real estate speculators and other assorted wheelers and dealers led by Dallas tycoon Morton Meyerson, chair of the Texas National Research Laboratory Commission (T.N.R.L.C.), which drew up the site proposal, and Tom Luce, the former chair and a candidate for governor in the Republican primary on March 13. This lobby already has spent millions of taxpayers' dollars to win for Texas the D.O.E.'s high-speed proton subway, beating out six other finalists—Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, North Carolina and Tennessee. Ellis County itself has chipped in $2 million for land acquisition, and some businesses are so eager for the project's infusion of dollars that they've donated land.

In 1987 a statewide bond issue reached deep into the pockets of Texas taxpayers, authorizing $1 billion in general obligation and revenue bonds to help pave the way for the S.S.C. by building roads and other infrastructure. Voters in this constitutional-amendment election were asked to support referendums and propositions on horse racing, jail districts, libraries, economic development and a vague high-tech "superconducting super collider research facility." The col-

Gayle Hudgens, a freelance writer and member of the North Texas Greens, devotes much of her time to merging the environmental and social justice movements.

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lider cartel poured several hundred thousand dollars into a media blitz to persuade people that Proposition 19 would be just swell for Texas, providing jobs and bringing cash to the state's flagging economy. Only 18 percent of the state's electorate approved Proposition 19, since only 29 percent of the registered voters bothered to vote on the proposition, and of those, 64 percent voted for the promise of economic nirvana.

Jay and Kathleen Paul built their home ten years ago near Maypearl, Texas, in the midst of hundred-year-old pecan trees, clear creeks, healthy wildlife and unobstructed vistas. Most of their neighbors are farm families who have been on this land for generations. One of the surface developments planned for the S.S.C. is an "injector area" with massive parking lots two miles from the Pauls' farm. Yet until they and some of their neighbors formed Texans Against the Super Collider in 1988, there was virtually no detailed information about the project available to the public, and there was little opposition. The D.O.E. did hold hearings, but most people didn't know about them unless they read the *Waxahachie Daily Light* carefully. "The people whose land is affected didn't know it until weeks after the meetings had taken place," says Kathleen Paul. She told of a man and woman who said they didn't understand what was going on. They went to the library, where the D.O.E. had filed its documents, as required by law. The husband looked at the site map and said to his wife, "Honey, we're history, because they want our property."

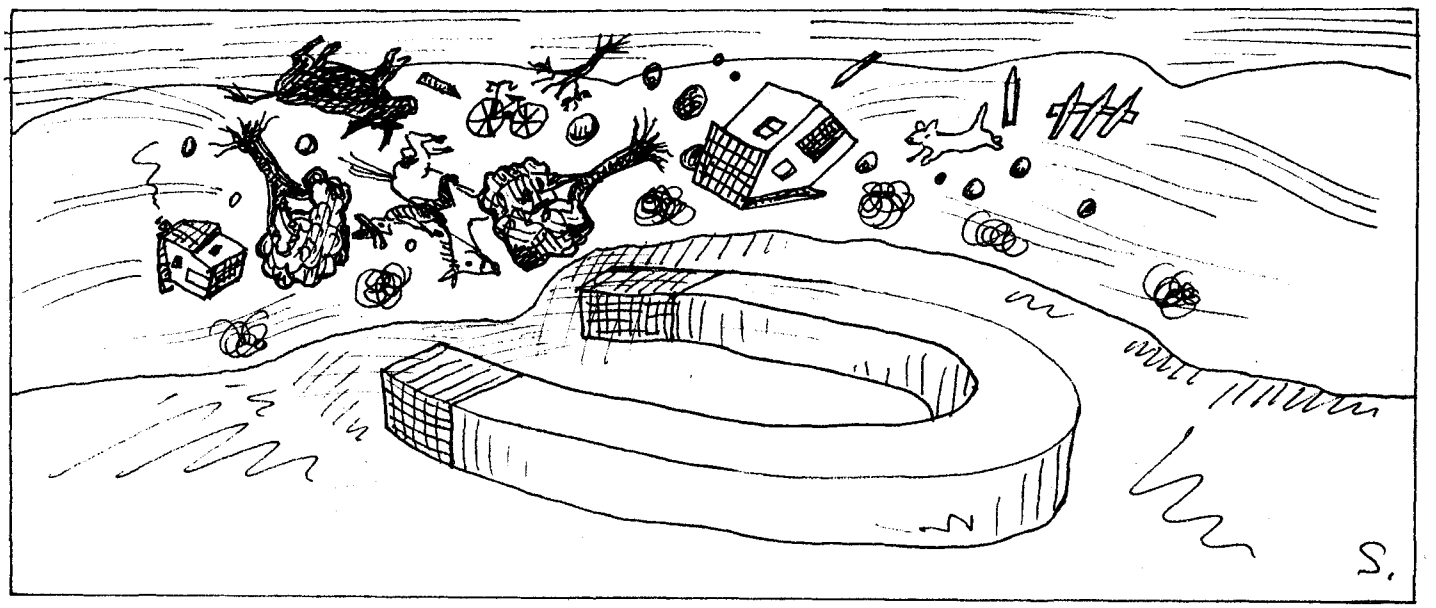
Low utility rates may soon be history too, because the S.S.C. has arranged to have its huge appetite for electricity subsidized. This especially irritates those who have resisted the area's Comanche Peak nuclear power plant, which recently loaded its first uranium fuel rods [see Geoffrey Aronson, "The Co-opting of CASE," December 4, 1989]. Not only does the collider's hunger for electricity provide a convenient rationale for an otherwise unnecessary nuclear power plant, the subsidy means that rate payers—rich and poor alike—will pay six to eight times more than the S.S.C. per kilowatt-hour. Texas Utilities has already asked the state Public Utility Commission for a 10.2 percent rate increase.

The S.S.C. is designed to send two beams made up of millions of protons hurtling through two pipes within the tunnel toward each other at almost the speed of light. When they collide in an experimental hall, they are supposed to yield concentrations of energy as dense as those in the first moment of the big bang, when, many physicists believe, the universe burst into existence more than 10 billion years ago. Proponents of the S.S.C. say it is needed to unlock the secrets of subatomic structures, and that the knowledge gained will be extremely valuable.

They support this position by pointing to breakthroughs fostered by earlier colliders: the development of new industries and practical applications such as equipment for medical diagnosis and treatment, positron emission tomography scans, magnetic resonance imaging, nuclear medicine and superconducting magnets. Moreover, these proponents warn that the United States will lose its international lead in high-energy physics if the S.S.C. is not built. "Star Wars" is rarely mentioned, but it, too, is part of the collider agenda.

Opponents argue that the S.S.C. is an insanely expensive supertoy for a handful of what one critic calls "spoiled brats" in the high-energy physics game. Even James Krumhansl, president-elect of the American Physical Society, has said the S.S.C. has no immediate relevance to U.S. technological or economic competitiveness. Yet the tunnel vision persists, ignoring the budget deficit and the critical need for more practical scientific research, not to mention the need to repair the nation's environment and infrastructure, house the homeless and raise millions of Americans out of poverty. Incredibly, the multibillion-dollar project would be decommissioned in only twenty years because the metal, concrete and other materials in the tunnel would become so radioactive from bombardment by neutrons released during experiments that the Superconducting Super Collider could no longer be used.

Most opponents of the project in Ellis County are already worrying about that bombardment. Predictably, the D.O.E. insists that the S.S.C. poses no health hazard and that the



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collisions are controllable, despite their complexity and the speed at which they take place. In fact, radionuclides and all sorts of protons can form a witches' brew of basic particles. The experiments also produce energetic and very penetrating beams of subatomic particles such as muons, which have a tendency to scatter in all directions through the walls of the tunnel, through the soil, the water and even the Austin chalk formation. Lethal clouds of neutrons can hover above ground around the ventilation shafts. And any time the S.S.C. is in operation, muons can strike live organisms above or adjacent to the S.S.C. with ionizing radiation, which, at the lowest dose, can induce mutations.

In 1988, writing on behalf of the Tennessee chapter of the Sierra Club, which opposed efforts to land the collider for that state, molecular biologist R.J. Neff, professor emeritus at Vanderbilt University, told Tennessee Representative Bart Gordon about certain S.S.C. environmental problems not yet "addressed by local governments, the State of Tennessee, or by the . . . DOE." His letter referred in part to soil irradiation and muons. At the Fermilab collider in Batavia, Illinois, he wrote, "the muons were detected at the site boundary which appears to be about three miles from the target source [where the collision takes place]. The beams at S.S.C. should be even more penetrating in that the protons will be accelerated to 20 TeV [trillion electron volts]. . . . One would expect some of the ricocheting particles in the beam to penetrate the surface and *consequently penetrate and cause ionizations [ionizing radiation] in any living thing on the surface that might be in their path.*" (Emphasis added.)

The Texas collider will be twelve times larger and twenty times more powerful in TeV than the one at Fermilab. If Fermilab's muons were found three miles from the target source, how far will the S.S.C.'s muons disperse? three miles times twelve? three miles times twenty? or even three miles times twelve times twenty (720 miles)? No one is certain, and the D.O.E. doesn't seem to care much.

Another problem is beam loss. Lawrence Jacobi, general manager of the Texas Low-Level Radioactive Waste Disposal Authority, warned in a letter to the T.N.R.L.C. in July 1987 that the "large number of experimental, state-of-the-art magnets and beam definers will dictate a beam loss occurrence higher than that experienced at a smaller, conventional accelerator. Each time a beam is lost, activation [or irradiation] of the beam line components, electronic modules, and tunnel equipment will occur. At Fermilab, for instance, neon lights and batteries from the tunnel lighting system are activated and treated as radioactive waste upon disposal. Silicon based vac-ion pump oils are a problem because they fall into a mixed chemical and radioactive waste category. Water conditioning resins become radioactive when activated ions are removed from the cooling water. *The sheer size and experimental nature of the SSC will dictate that there will be more of this type of waste, not less.*" (Emphasis added.)

Fermilab puts irradiated soil and material in a storage area called "the boneyard," which only reinforces the message in the February issue of *Scientific American*: No progress has been made in disposing of radioactive waste. Certainly Fermilab has had its problems. The Texas waste disposal authority reports that at Fermilab, "Tunnel emergency light batteries are activated by neutrons, and when replaced, the radioactive lead is a problem." Also, vacuum pump oil becomes contaminated with radioactivity. Other waste problems at Fermilab are the "nuisance" isotopes, such as cobalt 60, sodium 22 and copper 64. This last isotope is a "special problem" since "workers pilfer the copper to sell for scrap. More than once, the Fermilab staff has had to retrieve radioactive copper from local scrapyards."

Here in Texas we've known for a long time—it seems like forever—that there is no safe place for radioactive waste. The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant site near Carlsbad, New Mexico, remains empty because brine water in an abandoned potash mine could corrode containers of lethal transuranic waste, which would leak into aquifers and the Pecos River Valley ground water in both New Mexico and Texas. Yucca Mountain in Nevada, the site of a planned repository for nuclear waste, is on hold. The State of Idaho won't take any more radioactive waste. And Hanford, Washington, now rejects almost all waste from outside the state. In a letter to the T.N.R.L.C., the waste disposal authority's Jacobi put it plainly: "Although DOE dismisses mixed waste as a minute problem . . . DOE hazardous waste managers clearly reveal this [as] a major concern that is growing more complex every day."

One reason the D.O.E. awarded the S.S.C. to Texas was because the Texas proposal claimed that major geological and tunneling criteria (rock had to be impermeable and uniform, strong and predictable) were easily met. But more than one local geologist says this is nonsense, that the Austin chalk has been cut by the Balcones fault system. These fractures are active paths for migration of water that will be contaminated with radioactive tritium (with a half-life of 12.5 years and a hazardous life of 125 to 250 years), sodium 22 (with a half-life of 3 years and a hazardous life of 30 to 60 years) and other radioactive carcinogens that can rapidly flow into creeks and local water supplies. Then there are the fire ants—fierce, omnivorous insects that are attracted to electricity and chemical insulation and are capable of chewing through the protective shields of the underground cables and getting into the tunnel itself. According to a report by the Texas Department of Agriculture, the fire ants get into electrical contact points, where they eventually die and cause short circuits.

Clearly, it is the entire Superconducting Super Collider that should be short-circuited. Whatever benefits it might bring in the distant future can hardly be worth the cost at a time when the United States is reeling socially, economically and, not least, ecologically. Congress has not yet appropriated the next millions for the S.S.C., thus giving opponents of the project a chance to rally their forces. They should adopt the ferocity of fire ants in organizing their attack—and while they're at it they should chew up the sign that has been up for months on Highway 287 that says, "Waxahachie, Home of the SSC." □

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EDITORIALS.

(*Continued From Page 369*)
desirable as long as an author has lawful access to the materials.)

§ The copyright law must be amended to eliminate the virtually automatic issuance of an injunction if copyright infringement is found. That was the point of a trenchant concurring opinion in the Hubbard case by Chief Judge James Oakes of the Second Circuit, who noted the importance of First Amendment protection for issues of public concern, even in the face of claims of copyright infringement.

§ Congress should give better guidance on the amount of quotation allowed under the fair use doctrine for both published and unpublished works. In still another copyright case involving a biography of L. Ron Hubbard, a federal judge recently enjoined the publication of *A Piece of Blue Sky* by the Carol Publishing Group because quotations from the *published* writings of Hubbard made up 2.7 percent of the book. But in an earlier case the Court of Appeals had permitted as much as 4.3 percent of a book to be quoted matter because it felt the use to be justified. A set percentage of use should be declared as presumptively fair under the law.

§ The definition of "fair use" should emphasize that it is the author's function, not the courts', to determine the appropriate use of quotes, as long as the use is noncommercial. The trial court in the *Nation* case held that this magazine's quotation from the Ford memoirs was not "newsworthy" and therefore the quote was not fair use. The federal judge in the Carol Publishing case found that the use of quotations from the Hubbard books was not fair because they functioned as epigraphs for each of the chapters rather than as a basis for comment or criticism: "These passages use copyrighted materials as a literary device rather than as a basis for critical study of Mr. Hubbard. They therefore serve a very weak fair use purpose."

The idea that federal judges should act as editors or literary critics and may enjoin a book because the quotes are not newsworthy or not in the right place is another example of the unfortunate detour that the law of copyright has taken in the past five years. The copyright law is designed to insure that professional authors, composers and artists have legal protection to preserve their own creations and obtain an appropriate economic reward for their labors. The *Nation*, Salinger and Hubbard cases show that the law has been misused as a device of censorship for people with little interest in the quoted material who wish to stop discussion of their lives or actions. The law should be amended to bring copyright back in line with its only legitimate purpose.

LEON FRIEDMAN

Leon Friedman is a professor of copyright law at Hofstra Law School and acts as counsel to PEN American Center. He was one of The Nation*'s lawyers in its case against Harper & Row, which went to the Supreme Court.*

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

P. C. Comics

PAGAN KENNEDY

By 1969, *Zap Comix* had become so much a totem of the underground San Francisco scene that its editor, ninety-pound weakling Robert Crumb, was finally able to get laid. As he relates in a recent cartoon story, "I made up for all those years of deprivation by lunging maniacally at women I was attracted to . . . squeezing faces and humping legs. . . . I usually got away with it . . . famous eccentric artist, you know." His *Zap* included everything from instructions for smoking a joint to the adventures of Wonder Wart-Hog, in which the main character, unable to get it up, uses his snout instead. Underground comix, distributed through head shops along with bongs and roach clips, were ancillary to (male) hippie culture: They were kinky and they were druggy, and if they were too loud, then you were too old.

I discovered comic books that same year. I was 7 and I bought mine at Dart Drug while Dad browsed through the lawn-care aisle. Like most girls my age, my tastes ran toward *Casper, the Friendly Ghost*, *Wendy the White Witch* and *Richie Rich, the Poor Little Rich Boy*. Their titles were tellingly oxymoronic—in their candy-colored world, even ghosts, witches and capitalists were cute. And they, unlike the superhero stories the boys read, taught that goodness meant goody-two-shoeism: Rather than a strong left hook, girls' heroes got by on politeness, obedience and proper grooming. If Casper inadvertently scared human beings with his spooky looks, he, the spirit world's answer to Uncle Tom, would win them back with his courteousness. And Richie, that prig in the Little Lord Fauntleroy suit, always minded his millionaire dad.

Why was there such a tremendous gap between the fluff that companies like Marvel, DC Comics and Harvey Comics dished out to us kids and the acid humor of the undergrounds? One reason may have been a 1954 book by Frederic Wertham called *Seduction of the Innocent*. Wertham accused comic books of causing everything from juvenile delinquency to bad grammar. The book prompted a televised Senate hearing, and the subdued publishers formed the Comics Code Authority of America, which drew up guidelines that put the quirkier titles, notably those of Entertaining Comics (EC), out of business. *Mad*, which became enormously influential for 1960s underground cartoonists, was the only EC survivor—albeit as the tamer *Mad Magazine*.

Moreover, DC, Marvel and other biggies turned the creation of comic books into an assembly line. One artist drew according to a writer's script; another inked in the drawing; another put in color; another, the lettering. Of course, artists and writers seldom received royalties on their work or owned the characters they developed, a policy that insured that they would churn out copy.

Many of those who formed the underground had been kids when EC—which specialized in torn-off limbs, eyeballs popping out of skulls and Twilight Zone plot twists—was put on trial. Faced with a system in which comics that didn't meet the code couldn't get shelf space, publishers such as Last Gasp Eco-Funnies and The Rip Off Press printed up their own books and distributed them directly or through porno and head shops.

Not only did these presses seek to encourage free expression, they also tried to overturn the exploitative behavior of the mainstream companies. As Jack Jaxon, one of the founders of Rip Off, wrote in 1971, "Publishers of comix work with the artists in what virtually amounts to a partnership arrangement. . . . We [artists] also retain the copyright to our published work." Jaxon's manifesto, reprinted in 1989 by *Blab!*, included an epilogue in which he admitted, "Perhaps I was hasty in predicting the eventual collapse of the mainstream industry."

Indeed, as the 1970s wore on, head shops fell afoul of the law, and the underground—tied to a waning hippie subculture—began to wither away.

But with the 1980s, two alternative titles, *RAW* and *Weirdo*, arrived to resuscitate the scene. On the face of it, they had a lot in common: Both were edited by veterans of the 1960s underground, and both showcased the work of old and new talents in the potpourri style of literary magazines. But in sensibility, they couldn't have been farther apart. Art Spiegelman's edgy, European *RAW* was printed on pages at least as large as *Interview*'s and would have looked equally at home on a Soho coffee table. The large format and high-quality paper showed off each panel as a work of art, not merely a device to further the story at hand. Even when *RAW* artists drew in primitive and scratchy styles, you knew it was because they were more tortured and sensitive than you'd ever be.

R. Crumb's *Weirdo* also embraced primitive art styles, but in the American snot-dripping-out-of-the-nose tradition of Big Daddy Roth, renowned for his monsters driving hot rods. The inclusion of Crumb's own work in *Weirdo* tended to overshadow that of other artists, fine as many of them were. With his witty confessional style (tales of high-school foot fetishism, fr'instance) and drawings reminiscent of 1920s cartoons, Crumb was more a guru than a peer to other weirdos.

However, it was Spiegelman who most affected the way comic books are marketed. His masterpiece *Maus—A Survivor's Tale* recounts his father's experiences in a concentration camp, showing Jews as mice and Germans as cats. This "graphic novel" trailblazed comics' migration from the ghetto of special-interest markets to the (relatively) big bucks of book publishing. At first serialized in *RAW*, *Maus* was picked up by Pantheon and sold through bookstores—at a rate of 1,000 copies a week at one point. *RAW* itself is now put out by Penguin, alas in book format rather than as a coffee-table magazine.

But even after America's introduction to the graphic novel, relatively few comic books have made it into B. Daltons or Waldenbooks. For the rest, the "direct market" store—those comic book boutiques that stock both collector's items and the latest titles—has taken the place of the head shop, accounting for two-thirds of all comic books sold in the country. Such stores provide a venue for experimental works that otherwise might not get distributed. In addition, the specialty shops serve as hangouts where comics cognoscenti can meet to discuss the death of Robin or pick up more than the latest issue of *X-Men*.

Pagan Kennedy's nonfiction appears regularly in the Voice Literary Supplement. *Her short stories have been published in* The Village Voice, The Quarterly *and* Prairie Schooner, *and her cartoon stories have appeared in several small magazines.*

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What's perhaps most interesting about these stores, when you consider the antipathy between the mainstream and undergrounds in the 1960s, is that *Zap* (still going) now sits side by side with *Spiderman* on the shelves. The differences between the mainstream and the alternatives are falling away.

The big guys, eyeing an audience that now ranges in age from 13 to 29 (but which is still almost completely male), are scrambling to be arty and adult. In 1986, the same year *Maus* came out, megalith DC Comics published its own graphic novel, a Batman story called *The Dark Knight Returns*. The book marked several departures for DC. First, rather than having been churned out entirely in assembly-line fashion, it bears the distinctive stamp of one person, writer and penciler Frank Miller. Second, its themes aim unwaveringly at an older audience: Batman copes with the aging of his body, a soul as dark as his enemies' and, last but not least, nuclear war. In addition, *The Dark Knight*, first put out as a serialized comic, was published as a perfect-bound book on slick paper rather than on newsprint. At $12.95, few kids would be able to afford this comic book—indeed, it might put a strain on some adults' allowances.

But don't let its gussied-up looks fool you: *The Dark Knight* is just more of the same schlock. Miller adopts an easy nihilism to justify Batman's make-'em-die-screaming philosophy. The book has been hailed for reviving the vampirish 1930s Batman, but one would hope it is only fanboys weaned on costumed-hero books who are insisting that *The Dark Knight* qualifies as literature.

Watchmen, also serialized and later published in book form by DC, tackles the same hero-gone-wrong theme: The title is taken from the epigraph to the Tower Commission report, "Who watches the watchmen?" While you wouldn't want to call this book literature either, it's a lot more sophisticated than *The Dark Night*. Scriptwriter Alan Moore portrays costumed heroes as both bungling do-gooders and Lieutenant Calley–style sleazebags. In short, they're just like the folks we see on the news except they have a thing for leotards and masks. *Watchmen* may be a bit simple-minded, but it deserves recognition for the innovations it brings to the graphic novel form. Certain images appear and reappear with cinematic subtlety—for instance, a bloody "happy face" graces the first and last panels of the book. In addition, Moore and artist Dave Gibbons weave ersatz book excerpts, newspaper articles and even an EC-style comic book into the story line.

Recently, DC has been trying to grab an even artier market with an imprint called Piranha Press. For those not hip to the situation, these comic books may look like they're produced by an alternative press: Nowhere, except in the fine print on the inside cover, is it apparent that the comic books are put out by DC. With the exception of *The Drowned Girl*, every one of Piranha's titles wants to be bleak but is instead banal. The worst, because it tries the hardest to look punk and pained, is *Beautiful Stories for Ugly Children*, which pairs scratchy, angry drawings with poorly written, angry narratives. It's as if some executive had puzzled over Gary Panter's *Invasion of the Elvis Zombies*—a book with a surreal text and apocalyptic illustrations that was lavishly published by *RAW* but is now out of print—and thought, "Hell, what's the big deal? We can do this."

While DC tries to serve up its comics raw, or at least medium-rare, the "ground-level" companies (as they're

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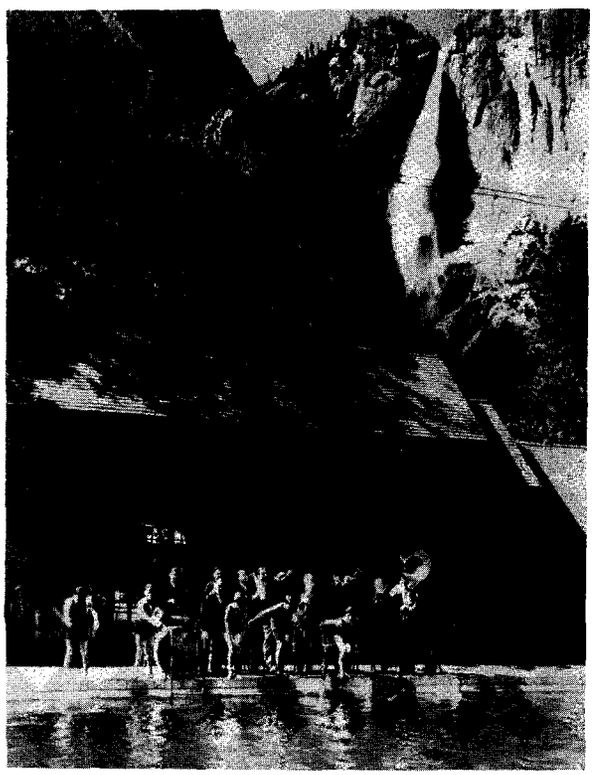

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called now that they've come up from underground) are mimicking the marketing techniques of the big guys. Unlike 1960s comix publishers, which tended to put out one title that included the work of many artists, today's ground-levels often sell each artist's work under a different title. These appear in standard, or better-quality, comic book form and are serialized, just like the lowly superhero book.

The foremost of these alternative publishers is Fantagraphics Books, which serializes Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez's work in *Love and Rockets*. Jaime draws and writes about a group of Latino punks in California; brother Gilbert, about the Central American anytown of Palomar. *Love and Rockets*, which has drawn a cult following, was the comic book that got me hooked again; except for the odd *RAW* (too pricey), I'd stopped reading comics after I grew out of *Betty and Veronica*.

It was Jaime Hernandez's "Locas" story (1986's No. 15 was the first issue I came across) that plunged me into a comics ecstasy I hadn't known since I was 10. Hernandez brings to life a group of neurotic, odd and headstrong women. In issue No. 15, for instance, Maggie, a pretty and plump *pocha*, fixes a truck for some Mexican brothers she has nicknamed Los Tres Estoogies, but is humiliated when they offer her money. Maggie sleeps in the same bed with Hopey, but it's not clear whether they're lovers. Hopey, a skinny, combat-booted Chicana, is in one of those punk bands that can never quite get off the ground: The singer's on drugs, the bassist takes herself too seriously and no one can agree whether the band should be called "Greg Brady Image" or "Our Wives Look Best to Us." Best of all, Hernandez draws in a style copped from Archie comics. He exaggerates facial expressions—for instance, drops of sweat fly from anxious characters—and displays a superb command of body language.

The drawings in boys' comic books are meant to convey movement, to help the reader feel what it's like to kick someone in the face or jump across a rooftop. To this end, artists play with perspective—they foreshorten bodies, let huge fists pop out of the panel. Girls' comic books, on the other hand, employ close-ups of faces, subtle expressions and body movements to supplement the dialogue. Hernandez's use of the visual idioms of girls' comic books—as much as his convincing and independent women characters—made *Love and Rockets*, for this girl raised on a Richie Rich diet, instantly familiar and readable.

However, Jaime Hernandez did not originally use the visual language of girls' comics, nor was he always a feminist. Maggie, for instance, started out as a curvy sci-fi babe, a mechanic who fixed hovercrafts and robots. Over the years, Hernandez pruned the fantastic elements from his world to concentrate on the characters. Recently, when he had Maggie gain weight, letters of protest poured in, attesting that a mostly male audience still may not be ready for realism, especially when that means real women.

Brother Gilbert Hernandez has an equal respect for strong women. His mythical Central American town is patrolled by a woman sheriff. In Palomar, where "men are men and women need a sense of humor," females lay down the law. And his *Heartbreak Soup* series brings to comics the feeling of Latin literature with its weave of plots and subplots and its Marquezian touches—ghosts appear casually among the living, and people dine on giant slugs. In an interview with *The Comics Journal*, he explained the origins of his new work (like Jaime, he started out with sci-fi babes): "There were always great stories that we'd heard from our uncles and aunts and our grandmother . . . about when they were living in Mexico. . . . And we thought, 'If we could just tell those stories somehow . . . ' But we figured that nobody white could understand this. We were naïve." Appropriately, Gilbert's drawing style shows the influences of painter Frida Kahlo and Mexican folk artists.

In *Love and Rockets*, Fantagraphics debuted Dan Clowes's cool camp detective story, and soon after he had his own serial called *Lloyd Llewellyn*. Clowes looks through X-ray specs at a world of late-nite cocktail lounges, *Mad Magazine* beatniks and killer sex kittens, amid which bumbles private dick Llewellyn. Several months ago Clowes embarked on a new title, *Eightball*, which allows him to mock more than just B movies. Issue No. 1 mercilessly makes fun of commercial comicdom in a story about a publishing czar who convinces his artists to work without pay by sermonizing, "These are our six flagship titles: The Army-Bots, Infinity Hombre, Musclemaster, The 10-Year Robot War, New Age Krystyll and Marionette Squad! . . . They will one day be read in classrooms and quoted by scholars!"

Another Fantagraphics artist, Carol Lay, also gets her point across by camping it up. Her *Good Girls* series parodies true-confession comics of the 1950s and 1960s—imitating their drawing style while undercutting their message of conformity. Lay's heroine Irene has, well, an unusual love problem. Raised in an African tribe, Irene has had her face molded and ritually scarred (it looks something like a telephone). When her blind boyfriend asks to feel her features, this leads to—Sob!—heartbreak. Even so, Irene refuses plastic surgery. She knows she's beautiful even if the world doesn't.

Other titles gaining followings and garnering praise are *Jim* (Fantagraphics), a psychedelic romp through the author's dream life; *Yummy Fur* (Vortex Comics), which links story lines about aliens, a sewer underworld and a portal to another dimension through a dead man's anus; and *Unsupervised Existence* (Fantagraphics), whose characters are the type of P.C. marginals you might meet at your food co-op.

The diversity of new titles suggests that publishers are still feeling out the possibilities of the comic book form. One role might be educational—as much as that might make some parents shudder. For instance, Will Eisner (creator of *The Spirit*) noted in a recent *New York Times Book Review* essay that the comic book manuals he worked on for the military persistently outperformed its traditional training methods.

Meanwhile, a 1987 comic book published by the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, *Real War Stories*, may have helped teach kids not to step into the recruiting office at all. It adapted real interviews to detail the horrors of war and the military's sexism and racism. Particularly moving was the final story, about El Salvador. A boy hears gunshots at night and in the morning finds soldiers hosing down the streets. The next panel shows a close-up of the water disappearing down the gutter: It's red. The comic won the critical acclaim of the war machine itself, in a fashion. Military officials have alleged that *Real War Stories* threatens national security.

I have my own hopes for the form. To survive today as an artist, one must identify oneself as a specialist—writer, draftsperson, painter. It's not so different from the division of labor enforced by the big comics companies, where pencilers seldom are allowed to write their own scripts.

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Thus, if the comic book can be liberated from the assembly line, it may come to represent one of the few venues for those whose talents don't fall into any one category. Fantagraphics, for example, will this year publish a collection of the stories, comics, illustrations and paintings of Kenneth Smith.

Like film, comic books are far more sensual than pure language, and therefore have the potential to appeal to a large popular audience, as they do in Europe and Japan. Unlike film, comic books can be produced by one person with little more investment than some boards, brushes and pens. No wonder the form has so often been on the wrong side of the law, associated with longhairs and lefties: As visceral as film, as silent as a book, and as easy to produce as finding an idle photocopier, the comic book is inherently subversive. □

After the Deluge

VALERIE MINER

BAOTOWN. *By Wang Anyi. Translated by Martha Avery. Norton. 143 pp. $17.95.*

"Bao Mountain was not that high, nor was the land that low, but the mountain locked it in, dividing a small world inside from what was far away and on the outside." Like many contemporary Chinese authors, Wang Anyi considers individuals in the context of community and history. We follow Baotowners through the Cultural Revolution of the 1970s into national and local movements, including the Four Beautifications and Five Spruce-Ups campaigns. Day by day villagers cope with destinies imposed by the Beijing bureaucracy and by the rain clouds. Their lives intersect at odd, interesting moments as the novel unfolds in vignettes with alternating points of view.

Wang Anyi, a Shanghai woman in her mid-30s, first became visible here with her story in the now-classic anthology *Seven Contemporary Chinese Women Writers* (1982). She has also published her own collection of short fiction, *Lapse of Time*. Both these volumes are available from China's Panda Books. *Baotown* is her first novel. As a teenager, Wang was exiled to the countryside in Anhui Province for eight years. She was released in 1976. I met Wang and her mother, the writer Ru Zhijuan, in Shanghai in 1983. A bright, modest woman, Wang had worked as a magazine editor and was about to start receiving a full-time salary from the Chinese Writers' Association. Today she is one of China's best-known young authors.

Throughout *Baotown*, Wang offers a droll metacommentary on the roles of the writer in society. Bao Renwen, nicknamed "Word Crazy," is an eager, naïve villager whom others consider educated beyond his usefulness. Ultimately he becomes a kind of wise fool facilitating village change.

> He wrote without regard for day or night, wrote on the unused parts of exercise pads from school, wrote until he had seven several thick books' worth of writing. His parents wanted him to think about finding a wife. He refused. "Writing first, family second": this too was his secret motto.

Word Crazy's deepest impact is on the family of Bao Yanshan. Bao Yanshan has three sons: Construction, the eldest and slowest, whom everyone is eager to marry off; Culture, an intelligent youth who falls in love with a transient named Little Jade; and Dregs, so named because he is the last of the family. Dregs, a gentle, sensitive child, befriends a bitter old man named Fifth Grandfather and invites him home to eat from the meager family pot. (Like the rest of the village, Bao Yanshan's family is struggling against starvation.)

Floods have shaped and reshaped Baotown over the centuries, and once again disastrous rains inundate the remote town, killing some villagers. Among the drowned are the wife of Bao Yanshan's neighbor Bao Bingde (she falls or jumps off his back), and Dregs, who loses his life in a failed attempt to rescue Fifth Grandfather. People search desperately for the child, but it is the reviled newcomer Picked-Up who dives into the deadly waters and retrieves Dregs's corpse.

After the flood, villagers reconstruct their world. Dregs's family deeply mourn him, but press on. Bao Bingde remarries and soon becomes a father. Picked-Up achieves new status for his courageous recovery of Dregs's body. And Word Crazy creates a romantic tale about the small

Valerie Miner's latest book is Trespassing and Other Stories *(The Crossing Press).*

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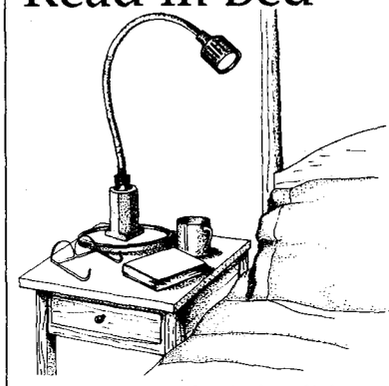

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lad who had put his life on the line for Fifth Grandfather.

The heroic story draws outsiders to Dregs's home, and the government erects a monument to the Youth Hero. Dregs's parents are given materials to build a bigger house. This enables their son Construction to find a wife, which frees the second son, Culture, to marry Little Jade. Meanwhile, Word Crazy is rather startled by what the pen has wrought.

Wang balances with eloquent irony a number of tricky themes—turgid party bureaucracy, community responsibility versus individual enterprise and intergenerational romance. Her portrayal of sexuality (heterosexuality) is strikingly candid for contemporary China. Wang writes with sympathy about Communist ideals and the villagers' daily crises, but her work is never rhetorical or sentimental.

Disappointingly, most of *Baotown*'s major characters are male. Most of the women we do meet are named in relationship to men—Aunt and Second Aunt, Bao Bingde's wife, Bao Yanshan's wife. I'm not looking for Ms. Youth Hero, but I do want to know the girls and women more fully.

Otherwise, *Baotown* is a very satisfying novel—deft, original, tragic, funny. This is one of the most felicitous translations of Chinese I have read in a long time. Martha Avery elegantly uses idiomatic English and allows the novelist's wit to shine through. □

MUSIC.

EDWARD W. SAID

Richard Strauss

In his brilliant *New Yorker* profile of Johnny Carson, Kenneth Tynan came to the conclusion that whatever it was that Carson actually did, he alone did it, and always did it perfectly. He may be part stand-up comic, part talk-show host, part Hollywood celebrity, but the Carson phenomenon, which has endured for longer than two decades, is more than any one of those things, and more than their sum.

And so it is, *toutes proportions gardées*, with Richard Strauss, whose astonishingly long career (1864-1949) paralleled and in strange ways touched many of the major changes in twentieth-century music without really participating in them. Glenn Gould described Strauss's serene indifference to all the trends around him as he unconcernedly did his own thing, much as Tynan wrote about Carson. Certainly there is a good deal of truth to this view of Strauss, even if it means forgetting the shattering musical effect of *Salomé* (1905) and *Elektra* (1908), operas considered in their time so revolutionary as to be scandalous. Schönberg, Mahler and Debussy were early devotees of Strauss, but it is the density of literary and cultural associations surrounding Strauss's career that makes him perhaps the richest, and yet somehow the most enigmatic, figure in twentieth-century music.

Strauss's long connection with Hugo von Hofmannsthal and his milieu is alluded to occasionally in Hermann Broch's monograph on the poet, as it is also in Theodor Adorno's altogether brilliant and little-known study of Strauss the composer and virtuoso conductor. Almost without significant exception, all the great names in early twentieth-century Central European music, particularly opera, had something to do with Strauss, from star conductors like Mahler, Clemens Krauss, Karl Böhm and Herbert von Karajan to majestically resplendent singers like Lotte Lehmann, Richard Tauber, Maria Jeritza and Ljuba Welitsch to the most famous impresarios and producers, like Diaghilev and Max Reinhardt.

Perhaps for the post-World War II generation, an early and unexpected exposure to Strauss is required for the mysterious spell to catch on and then, even more mysteriously, to persist. I can recall perfectly that it was in the spring of 1949, when I was 13, that I first heard his music performed, when Krauss brought the Vienna Philharmonic to Cairo. The two concerts I went to were held in the Cinema Rivoli, newly built and boasting a gigantic, somewhat anomalous "theater organ," complete with dancing lights and a charmingly handsome English intermission performer, one Gerald Peal. Krauss's intimate association with Strauss was completely unknown to me (he did the libretto for *Capriccio*, the very last of Strauss's operas), but the *Till Eulenspiegel* he conducted was overwhelming in its great washes of sound, its virtuosic playfulness and the "advanced" yet lushly compelling chromaticism of its harmonies. Immediately afterward I discovered a recording of "Salomes Tanz"—as the old label had it—in the family collection of 78s, and later that year, on a foggy late August afternoon while spending yet another dreary summer in a lonely Lebanese mountain village, I heard the BBC announcement of his death with an enjoyably mournful regret that I can still recapture.

Strauss's musical output was enormously varied, although it is probably his operatic *oeuvre* that is still most often encountered. Yet he wrote interestingly, and with a professional finish that was idiomatic in each genre and combination, for wind instruments, voice, violin, piano, chamber ensembles and large orchestra. It is generally believed that having gone a step beyond Wagner in *Salomé* and *Elektra*, Strauss thereafter retreated: *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*, for example, belong to the less advanced, lusher harmonic idiom of, say, *Lohengrin* or *Hänsel and Gretel*, even though the complexities of Hofmannsthal's texts are much greater and finer than either of the earlier works. But was Strauss's immense later operatic output (it includes, after all, such redoubtable works as *Arabella*, *Capriccio*, *Intermezzo*, *Die Ägyptische Helena* and *Daphne*) simply an expert yet reactionary reversion to simplifications of early German Romanticism, or is there some more important modernist achievement threaded through the works as a whole?

Adorno's stunningly biting characterization of Strauss—that he is like a musical traffic agent, pushing through great nervousness and fake serenity without transition; that he is the composer of an illusory music "inasmuch as it is the semblance of a life which does not exist"; that his style is "unfounded," merely the "will of the composing subject alone," unrestrained by the discipline of formal organization and addicted to sudden effects of the sort that remind us how early in this century people delighted in the powers bestowed upon them by turning electric switches on and off—do explain many of the composer's idiosyncrasies and weaknesses (compared with Wagner, for instance). But Adorno writes as Strauss's contemporary, who saw in Strauss an aesthetic practice opposed to that of the second Viennese School, whose cause Adorno served as social champion and philosopher. Nevertheless Strauss's career rests, I think, on altogether more interesting grounds than Adorno allows, and these are revealed almost as often as one of his works is performed today.

First is Strauss's relationship to texts, which are often quite distinguished. Few composers were more interested in the literary, and few developed more working relationships with good writers than

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Strauss. Yet the music sometimes makes you feel that it is missing the point of the words, or that even if it is beautiful music, it is passing over complexities and allusions in the texts. Conversely, much of Strauss's greatest and most intricate music is set to works or passages in the text that do not warrant such wonderful sound. Thus, for example, his early tone poems *Don Juan* and *Don Quixote* are wonderful compositions for virtuoso orchestra, but they are often laughable illustrations of great literary masterpieces. Strauss set himself up for these losing comparisons by writing out the programs and then illustrating them musically—but in much the way a two-line prose caption might "illustrate" and explain a painting like *Las Meninas*. The whole of *Ariadne*, which in Hofmannsthal's superb text is metatheater at its most precious and refined, is shot through with musical incongruities that give hair-raising coloratura roulades to a trifling text (Zerbinetta's aria) and uninspired strophic repetition to one of the great mystical unions of all time (between Ariadne and Bacchus).

Second, Strauss's capacity for sublime melody and rhapsodic melodic variation, or *Schwung*, is almost always strung together with long patches of dismally skillful (in my opinion) episodic writing, often polyphonic in nature. This is evident in his operas as early as *Salomé*, in which Jokanaan's good qualities (like Chrysothemis's in *Elektra*) are associated with soaring, albeit occasionally banal, major-key tunes. The busy narrative work of the score, however, is given over to the other characters, whose climactic moments—for example, the discussion among the assembled Jews—are overripe, overwritten yet masterful displays of technical skill. This attracts attention to itself and, unfortunately, to the threadbare text. The contrast in Act I of *Rosenkavalier* between the Italian tenor's aria and the chattery passage work of much that surrounds it is stark indeed, as is the same discrepancy between Olivier's sonnet and the very long arguments on the relative importance of music and words that it provokes in *Capriccio*.

In short, Strauss's music is made up of unresolved discrepancies that underline the absence of musical forms (sonata, variation, rondo, etc.) that had guaranteed the continuity and consequence of earlier music. There is a sublime confidence in workmanship that, as Adorno noted, pulls things along at the same time that it unembarrassedly draws attention to itself and to all sorts of missing transitions, sequences and resolutions. And precisely those absences and the abrupt alternation between a sweet melodic strain and a relentlessly competent proclivity for musical working-out make Strauss's work as a whole stand so dramatically apart from the mainstream in twentieth-century classical music. As compared with the rigorous efforts of Stravinsky, Berg or Hindemith to integrate form with content, Strauss's unruffled consistency, which is based at its very worst on heedless inconsistency, partly the tuneful atavism of a *gemütlich* songster and partly the formidable professionalism of a modern expert, seems almost miraculous. So it must have struck his intellectual collaborators, who frequently found themselves trying to supply the missing connections between Strauss's music and its context. Hence, in most of Strauss's middle and later operas, the reliance on a fantasy or fable. The most elaborate, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1919), is ornate and complicated enough as it is, but it also depends for its final sense on a much longer narrative prose version written by Hofmannsthal well after the final libretto had been prepared for Strauss's realization.

Considered by some serious critics to be Strauss's greatest stage work, *Frau* has

THE LONG WEEKEND

When Augustine was plundered of coquina block
my mother dreamed the noise of war away,
Block Island cruises and the doctors' sons

who drank anatomy in lecture rooms
and steeped their hands in death. The family
black-paper scrapbooks leaked their corner mounts,

each snapshot mounted like a Bengal tiger,
and mourned the *fin de siècle* upstairs maid
whose Christian conscience snapped one Christmas Eve.

She bathed away her cares in chimney soot.
My mother wished that summer to be black
and tanned while both her friends stayed lily white.

They fished the southern reaches where the pickerel
regained the outer margins of the lake,
the mirrored blue of deco coffee tables.

The Lord's avenging angel brought the mail
from Iceland, Normandy, wherever boys
took leases on my mother's high-school charm.

Grandmother's beaded dresses lay embalmed
in dime-store tissue and cedar cabinets,
the past my mother wrapped herself within

while shaking V-mail from its envelopes.
Beneath the past, another past corrupts
all memory of place. My mother found

a numbers runner's box of betting slips
still wedged between the hand-sawn attic joists,
Dutch Masters on the lid. It was her joke,

whenever small disasters made us weep:
Dutch Masters. It must have been Dutch Masters.
She fell asleep one wartime afternoon

and woke to children and the atom bomb.

William Logan

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always struck me as his most typical and symptomatic, an unsuccessful attempt to bring *Die Zauberflöte* into the twentieth century. Its plot is an utterly unconvincing Orientalist version of "Eastern" parable, involving a childless emperor and empress who must perform an act of selflessness before their union can be made fertile. This gesture occurs in the second scene of the last act, but is prepared for by an immensely long and tedious process through which a dyer's wife, an earthy creature, is cajoled into giving up her shadow (symbolic of fertility) to the empress. The opera is full of miscellaneous quasi-allegorical creatures, including a falcon and a nurse who are messengers from another world (ruled by a mysterious figure called Keikobad), and supporting characters related to Barak (the dyer) and his wife, including a chorus of unborn children.

Frau is the largest of Strauss's operas, and its proliferating but often superfluous action has always reminded me of George Orwell's comment that the profusion of minor characters in Dickens's work testifies to his "weedlike" imagination. Barak turns out to have several deformed brothers, each of whom in Act II is remorselessly given many notes to sing by Strauss. *Frau* seems like an odd choice for the Metropolitan Opera, considering its complicated sets, the large number of characters and its gargantuan, scarcely comprehensible plot. It requires a conductor and performers with immense staying power, who must also be blissfully unaware of the solemn idiocy in which they are involved. But in another sense *Frau* is the perfect opera for the Met: Its unexplained presence in a repertory made up largely of Puccini and Verdi perfectly dramatizes the company's timid planning and unreflective commercialism. *Frau*'s verbal and musical texture are so dense as to make any true understanding of the opera totally impossible for an audience already beaten into submission and incomprehension, and the work's unabashed, not to say unreasonable exoticism suits the Met's proclivity for bigness, falseness and coarse spectacle.

On November 13, Christoph Perick conducted the Met's extraordinarily fine orchestra with real drive and eloquence, but his accomplishment in turn underscored the cast's fairly ordinary feats. Only the redoubtable Helga Dernesch, as the connivingly competent nurse, her voice with a mere fraction of its former resonance, did her part with some understanding of what it was all about; so did Bernd Weikl as Barak, a less interesting role. But Marilyn Zschau as the dyer's wife and Ruth Falcon as the empress were barely competent as they negotiated the diabolically demanding music. You felt that they were just trying to make it through to the end with determination rather than passionate conviction; Falcon was substituting for Mechthild Gessendorf, one of last year's Sieglindes, but although her powerful voice has a shrill whiteness in its upper register that could pierce Strauss's often impacted orchestral mass, it remained basically unexpressive. The unfortunate Robert Schunk just barely got through the emperor's part, all too painfully reminding one why Strauss really wrote for sopranos, not for male singers.

There are two transcendentally beautiful (in the imbricated hyper-Brahmsian idiom of Strauss's best "happy" moments) passages in the opera: one, the orchestral transition between the two scenes of Act I; the other, the opera's concluding quartet in which Barak, his wife, the emperor and the empress sing of reconciliation and connubial harmony in a

LIKE A WOMAN

It happens that I am tired of being a man.
—Pablo Neruda

I'm tired of being a woman. The dress-shop mannequin
a week's window-shopping has worn thin
has come apart at her seams,

her heavily made-up eyes still unseeing,
and just as well. Here lies her upper body,
armless, bald but for a strip of Velcro on her crown,

topper by her sleek unbending legs, her toeless feet.
Beneath her nipple-less, well rounded breast,
someone has punched a hole where a heart should go.

Around the mounded parts, a window dresser tiptoes,
barefoot through toppled shoe boxes and stray shoes,
her blistered heels revealed.

From its pink parlor seeps the smell of beauty,
the perfumed chemicals of the permanent
that, tired of my hair, I've undergone.

Now the matted kinks of sheep are mine,
the curls yet to relax, though I'm to rest assured.
Mirrored in the men's store window

between two well stuffed shirts,
arms tied behind their backs, waiting
to be buttoned up in jackets of the better wools

whose sleeves hang empty to show off their cut,
I'm not myself. Someone else is tired:
against the palings raised to save the boys' school

from the wicked workaday traffic skirting past,
a man in a smart gray suit is slumped,
unmanned by grief. I do what women are told to do

around a stranger. I hurry on
and, though he would not notice, spare him
the insult of my looking back.

Wracked with sobs, he looks
on some private ruin and, like a woman, weeps.

Debora Greger

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scene that matches the last act of Wagner's *Siegfried* for brilliance and sustained ecstatic inspiration. The Act I interlude illustrates Strauss's seemingly unmotivated capacity for producing music that is never recalled or developed again, but which gestures in an almost Proustian way toward memories of an unspecified earlier idyllic life: urban, cosmopolitan, earnest and somehow good. The music is compellingly European, orderly, melodically tuneful and verging on the kind of sentimentality we associate with handcrafted, rather than mass-produced, objets d'art. In the final quartet Strauss's strenuous wish to climb the highest mountains of human happiness (in the Met's tinselly production the two couples are perched insecurely and hierarchically on two craggy peaks) results in the kind of summarizing yet dutifully skillful music he reserved for his best moments with Hofmannsthal, for example the final trio in *Rosenkavalier* and Ariadne's opening monologue.

Strauss, who outdid himself as he got older (this is the remarkable aspect of his incredibly well-preserved and almost routinely reproduced gift), reverted to this kind of writing in his greatest last period music, mostly written after World War II. Perhaps because his style of ecstatic finality became largely affirmative—unlike the later style of Beethoven, whose mixture of conventionality and soaring sublimity is too unsettling to be comfortable—Strauss's autumnal summational statements in the Oboe Concerto, *Metamorphoses* and the *Four Last Songs* for soprano and orchestra do not point outward, do not suggest what his earlier music under- or misinterprets in the program or text, do not leave one with the impression of a mismatch or incongruity of some sort. On the contrary, the despairing radiance of the music is all under control, stripped of self-conscious flourishes, austere in spirit and, paradoxically, luxurious in effect. The *Songs* are, I think, his most perfect realization of the form, but they are rarely performed because the slightest hesitation in diction, expression or balance between singer and ensemble simply tears the fabric, renders it banal and awkward. On October 28, three weeks before the Met's *Frau*, they were performed in Carnegie Hall by Julia Varady and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Armin Jordan with a professionalism and flat reverence on Varady's part that never really took off, never came up to Jordan's naturalness and expansive ease.

It is strangely fitting that the last of the *Songs*, "Im Abendrot" ("At Dusk"), with text by Joseph von Eichendorff, is *literally* elegiac but in fact opens out at the very end with a quizzical doubt about the actual reality of ending—"Can this perhaps be death?"—as if to suggest that it might not be. The orchestral postlude rests on one of Strauss's favorite devices, a melodic elaboration above a sustained 6/4 pedal chord, that is, a deliberately prolonged and delayed suspension of the conventional ending. Even when he is concluding, Strauss lingers, moves, sidesteps and asks for a little longer. This is his link to the modernist movement, his own eccentric contribution to it: not to conclude even when there is nothing further to say, not to stop teasing out from "natural" harmony the implications of an already exhausted medium, not to resist ignoring the historical situation of his music while at the same time staging and restaging its anachronistic persistence. Despite the lavishness of his means, the resolutely minute economy of his aesthetic makes Strauss the sovereign as well as the only figure in the genre of post-Romanticism that he created and went on spinning out till his last day. □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Progress
Some Americans Abroad
The Film Society
Crowbar

The most conspicuous shortage in New York theater, and in American theater generally, is good writing. Put it another way: When a play misfires, it is most likely the playwright's fault. New York theater abounds with capable actors of all ages and with directors licensed to drive vehicles. The vehicles just aren't being manufactured in anything like sufficient quantity. The current Broadway season has produced one dramatic play that's still running, *A Few Good Men*; two Tennessee Williams revivals, one closed and one soon to open; and a revival of Somerset Maugham's *The Circle*. Still to come are an adaptation of *The Grapes of Wrath*, pretested in England, and Peter Shaffer's *Lettice and Lovage*. (Significantly, the weekday notice in *The New York Times*'s "Theater Directory" omits men-

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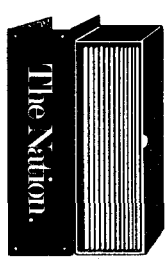

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tion of the playwright and puts the stars above the title.) There are, as well, a pair of one-person shows, one a revival, the other, *Tru*, a feat of impersonation and not by any stretch of the imagination a drama.

Off Broadway there were two good plays by American playwrights, *The Lisbon Traviata* and *The Widow's Blind Date* at Lincoln Center, a one-act *jeu d'esprit* by David Mamet. And that's pretty much it. There have been, and still are, a variety of reviews, travesties, and one-person shows, almost all of which are fueled by performance energies rather than writing talent.

Theater people are inclined to blame unappreciative critics and audiences for this state of affairs, but I am inclined to blame theater people. Not across the board, certainly, and seldom with *intent* to kill, except for that component of the avant-garde that regards mimetic action as child's play, the text as a field to be plowed, and incoherence as proof of poetry. For me, the work of Richard Foreman (as author) and of the Wooster Group epitomizes this attitude, and I have spared readers of *The Nation* long diatribes after witnessing anew the Emperor's latest fashion statements and fuming at the inevitable hype they meet in the predictable venues. It would be wasted breath. There will always be a bohemian minority eager to applaud this particular brand of *je m'en fouiste* rebellion, not shocked themselves but delighted to think how shocked the audience that isn't there would be, if they only knew.

The antics of the antitheater are a reflection of the demise, or diminution, of the playwright, not its cause. Its cause is the rivalry between actors and writers. Actors (I imagine) must often resent the tyranny of the text. They have had the experience of being forced to deliver bad dialogue, as wooden characters, in unfocused plays, and sometimes they've even overcome these odds to register a personal success (as Robert Morse does in *Tru*). Moreover, a large part of an actor's training nowadays is improvisation, which is the ultimate challenge to the authority of authorship. The great improvisationists, like Nichols and May, when they do not graduate to stardom, are likely to become great directors. But writers? No, writing is something else again, and something fundamentally opposed to improvisation.

In England actors have a different sort of training, and playwrights thrive. Of the plays under review, the first is by an Englishman, Doug Lucie; the second, by an American, Richard Nelson, who's enjoyed his major success in England; the third, by an American, Jon Robin Baitz, writing about South Africa and living in Los Angeles. All three evidence a level of basic play-writing competence that would have been taken for granted by theatergoers thirty years ago but which now registers as a mark of uncommon excellence.

Doug Lucie's *Progress*, which was performed at the Hudson Guild Theatre under the direction of Geoffrey Sherman (who is English), is a comedy of contemporary manners, an upper-middle-class equivalent to "saucy" West End comedies of the Ben Travers sort, the chief difference being that Lucie's sexual intriguers are about equally divided between straight and gay. There is also an effort (which finally misfires) to relate the protagonist's bad behavior to the inherent beastliness of men even under the new feminist dispensation. What works about the play is that there are eight distinctly realized characters capable of vivid self-expression, who engage in a succession of actions of steadily heightening interest and hilarity. This is something improvisation cannot achieve. It requires the premeditation and fuss of craftsmanship. Lucie effaces his own presence in a craftsmanly way (there's no character who is his spokesman), and this allows the actors to shine through their roles. Rarely have I seen a cast who seem to inhabit their parts with such seeming inevitability. Aha! thought I, *this* must be what casting directors are for. (It's a concept that sometimes puzzles me; I've been to a play with a cast of four that listed *two* casting directors on the program.) But the program listed no such credit. Credit must therefore go directly to the actors, and especially to Ivar Brogger, as a trendy sexual opportunist; to Anne Bobby, as his Cockney opportunity; to Nelson Avidon, as a gay Lothario with a beguiling stammer; and to Edmund Lewis, who gets to do a wonderful drunk scene.

Some Americans Abroad, at Lincoln Center's Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, is a comedy of approximately the same dimensions and degree of seriousness (medium). Richard Nelson's characters are, like Lucie's, recognizable social types—college English department academics, their spouses and students. In the verbal sparring contests that take up most of the play's two acts, Nelson's characters come off as slightly more crass than Lucie's. We more often groan at their

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gaucheries than admire the crackle of their wit. But it is not a marked difference, and overall it's not hard to see why Nelson should have won his stripes as a playwright in London, where he has attained that degree of establishment status that his other credits include the book for the workmanlike but uninspired musical *Chess* and adaptations of Beaumarchais, Molière and Chekhov.

The plot of *Some Americans Abroad* is on the same scale as the moral dimensions of its characters—slight. At center stage is Colin Stinton, playing the new English department head at an American college; he is escorting a group of faculty and students on a monthlong tour of English theaters. In assorted tourist locales, from London sidewalks to the Stratford-on-Avon Pizza Hut, Stinton faces two crises of conscience: (1) the need to inform a woebegone, tag-along professor, Bob Balaban, that all his sycophancy has not gained him tenure or even one more year's work (a task he continually funks); and (2) protecting his best friend from the threats of a student who barters withdrawing her probably untrue accusations of sexual abuse by said friend for a passing grade (this ball he fumbles as well). Many of the pleasures the play affords are simple recognitions: of the icons of Eng Lit, the sights and weather of tourist England, the snobberies of academia, the politics involved in splitting a large tab at a restaurant. All these things are drolly observed. The entire cast performed ably, if not as inevitably as the cast of *Progress*. The real star of the show was probably the array of preset tables hanging like so many swords of Damocles above the arena stage; the tables descended at regular intervals for real meals to be consumed from the plates that had gleamed emptily as they hung aloft.

I missed *The Film Society* when it was done in New York by Second Stage Theatre, but I can't imagine it could have been any better here than in its recent production by Baltimore's Center Stage. The best regional theaters (and Center Stage is certainly in that category) hold an inherent advantage in that their audiences and personnel have an ongoing, active acquaintance with a wide range of traditional drama. They are, in a sense, captive audiences. Therefore, when modern playwrights attempt those heights, their aspirations can be seen in their proper context and valued accordingly. Of all the plays under consideration, Baitz's *The Film Society* is most ambitious—in an authorly way. It challenges comparison to Ibsen more than to Ben Travers, and if it finally doesn't rise to the heights of drama with a capital D, even so it commands a different kind of respect. As a playwright, Baitz is a contender.

The protagonist of *The Film Society* is Jonathon Balton (done to a T by Bill Kux), a timeserving teacher at a failing English-language boys' school in South Africa. He owes his tenuous post to his deceased father's benefactions, and in the course of the play he rises to the position of headmaster, thanks to his perfect and unconscionable malleability. It is his tragedy to succeed by virtue of his mediocrity and lack of principle—a premise not very different from Richard Nelson's in *Some Americans Abroad*, but Baitz makes his spineless protagonist emblemize immensely more. By the last curtain, Balton has become the embodiment of all that is lukewarm and culpable.

And more: Baitz does this with a cast of six characters, who manage to represent a vivid cross section of South African white, middle-class society. His scenic strategy is as fluid as Nelson's, but it is even better, if less showily, realized by Derek McLane's set design, which pictures forth, on a Cinemascope-proportioned stage, a series of interior and exterior scenes with a finely judged balance of the illusory and the surreal. (In justice, the lighting designer, Stephen Strawbridge, must take some of the credit.)

In supporting roles, Mikel Sarah Lambert, as Balton's mother, and Thomas Barbour, as the retiring headmaster, must be cited for acting up, if not a storm, then vividly bad weather.

When I had the opportunity, before the play, to discuss the State of the Theater Today with Center Stage's artistic director, Stan Wojewodski Jr., I asked him, vis-à-vis the health of American theater in general, how many of a possible twenty visits to theaters all over the country he would allot to plays in New York City and how many to regional theaters. His ratio was five to fifteen, and I, with much less experience of regional theater, would be inclined to concur. Regional theaters, by virtue of their continuous engagement with the classics, maintain a clearer sense of what is essential to drama: good play-writing.

The trouble with theories is that they are so easily confounded by experience, and I must qualify much of what I've said above by admitting that my

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most vivid theatrical experience of the last so long was none of the above but *Crowbar*, a performance piece staged by En Garde Arts at the Victory Theater on 42nd Street. En Garde Arts is the "site-specific" theater company founded in 1985 by Anne Hamburger, who has a talent for turning unlikely nooks and crannies of the world at large—Central Park, the Chelsea Hotel, the Brooklyn waterfront—into de facto theaters. Her latest and largest inspiration has been to take over a real theater on the brink of annihilation and to commission from playwright Mac Wellman and composer David Van Tieghem a kind of *son et lumière* pageant celebrating the building's history, from its opening night premiere of *Sag Harbor* in 1900 (in which the actors eat real clam pies and gingerbread right on stage) down through the decades as it becomes a burlesque house, a movie theater and, until just yesterday, a porn palace.

Wellman and Van Tieghem have risen to the occasion with a theatrical event of genuine inspiration. Not a drama, perhaps, since there is next to no story line; rather, they have provided a simulated haunting with musical accompaniment, a spookhouse for sophisticates. As the audience sits onstage and in a bank of seats at the front of the orchestra, a cast of eight actors, backed up by a chorus of twenty, are deployed all about the theater, on the stage, in the wings, in the boxes, aisles and balconies—even aloft in the dome. They represent a cross section of real-life New Yorkers who suffered mischance or killed themselves at the time the theater opened (their deaths were culled from contemporary newspapers). Included is one ghost, who had been killed by the crowbar of the title as it fell from the dome during the building's construction.

The style of this haunting varies from the high-polish realism of the apparition of David Belasco (many of whose works premiered here) to the deliciously ditzy monologues of an aggrieved, mad Polish housewife (done to a fare-thee-well by Elzbieta Czyzewska), with a midrange of specters whose identities keep slipping away from them to beautiful effect. Omar Shapli is splendid as a Victorian paterfamilias. Cordelia Richards and Mollie O'Mara are memorable maidenly wraiths. Not to forget Yusef Bulos as Belasco, Nora Dunfee as a woman who's been waiting ninety years to see the second act of *Sag Harbor* and Glen M. Santiago, a supervisory spirit who plays a saxophone while suspended at a great height in a body harness from the space above the wings.

All this neglects Van Tieghem's contributions as a composer, which range from wispy to bombastic as the occasion requires. The occasion never quite requires song or dance as such; rather, Van Tieghem's task is to dramatize the varied and imposing spaces of the Victory Theater, which he does with a fertile aural imagination, at one point having the choragus lead his chorus all about the house as he uses its appurtenances—seats, pillars, brass rails—as instruments of percussion.

To suggest the overall effect of *Crowbar* I would have to hark back to the glory days of Judson Church, when Al Carmines was producing his best work there, especially the work he based on texts by Gertrude Stein. Wellman's text often uses repetition as Stein might have, and Richard Caliban's direction steers a similar exhilarating course between the cozily quotidian and the gracefully weird. As an evocation of ghostliness I can't recall seeing anything in live theater to equal it, and as an evocation of the ill-fated Victory Theater it is genuinely poignant. One experiences a particular *frisson* in watching a play that is designed for this unique space and can never be transferred, meaningfully, elsewhere. Soon, probably, the theater—the entire street of theaters—will not exist. Theater in its nature is an evanescent art form, but it can scarcely get more evanescent than this. □

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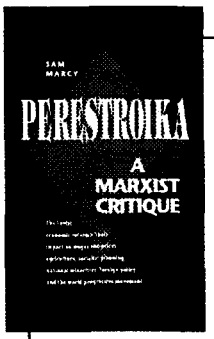

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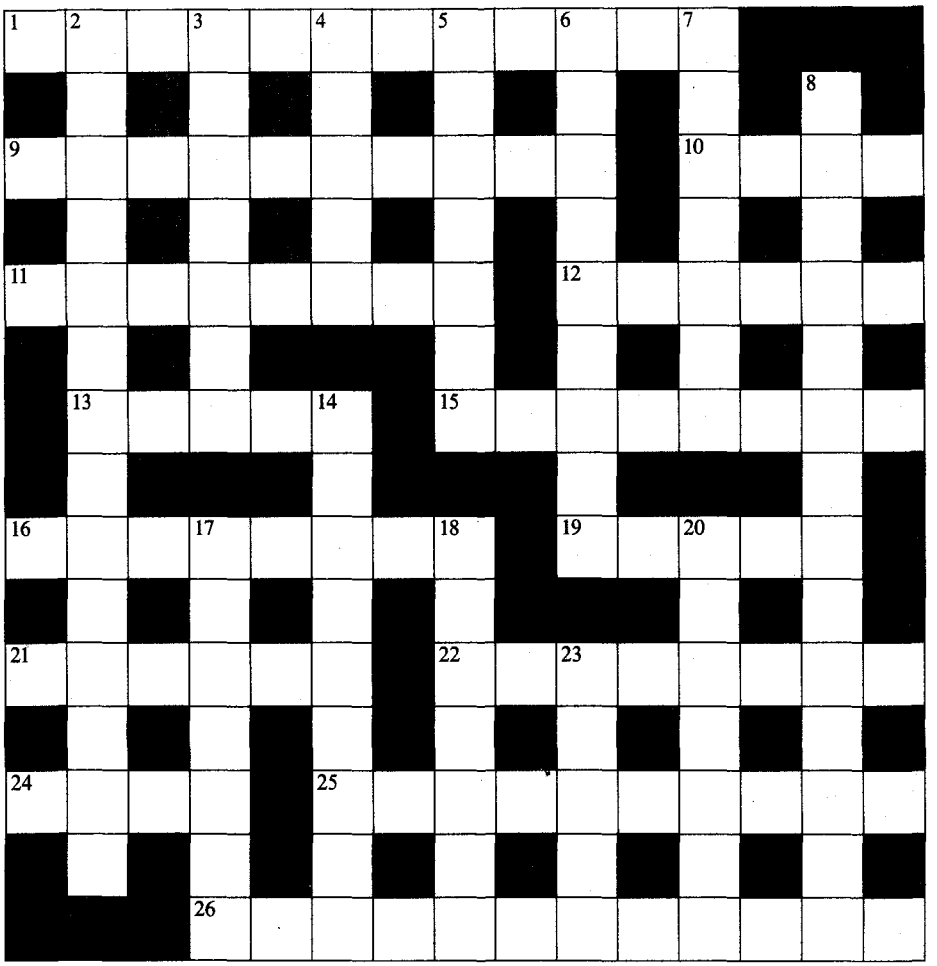

ACROSS

1 Such as Goldilocks' visitors see, as one testifies. (5,7)
9 Where the shoemaker works on size 14, finally? (2,4,4)
10 First man, then a female example. (4)
11 One who is pent up, perhaps, might go between, born together. (8)
12 Going bail, in a way, is what the judge hears at times. (6)
13 Such use is considered unusual for a woman, as Eddie knew better than such as us! (5)
15 Groves might be particularly English, which turns on a point about one of Napoleon's staff. (8)
16 Might the achievement possessed by the woman prove to be such as contribute to flight? (8)
19 It might be Leo's head in the sack, but those who [illegible]e it up aren't being so. (5)
21 Short notice with the opening coming! (6)
22 Is a "ringer" perhaps a correct name for one who helped Columbus? (8)
24 A long way off from the better thing Mr. Carton talked about! (4)
25 This sort of trial suits those who like to make a ceremony out of everything! (10)
26 One doesn't want to have one in a low dive, though it might take place on the runway. (5,7)

DOWN

2 An ogre might, as they say a reputed pig does. (3,4,4,3)
3 They might stay with you as unsubstantiated stories, one hears. (7)
4 See 7 down
5 Perhaps such varlets and other people tripped on them. (7)
6 Arms that go to certain mouths, and carry a lot of water. (9)
7 and 4 Not so racist as the "Paddy" type—good for 5 with the first part of 8. (7,5)
8 Might it prove embarrassing if one comes out of the closet? (6,8)
14 The sort of college where you get to chose a kind of examination? (9)
17 Cancer seen to have an intermittently high appearance. (3,4)
18 How Gulliver's father worked, being loud in humor and rather sneaky about it? (7)
20 Typically a Ute or an Eskimo is a dreamer, in dancing to display it. (7)
23 Gulf city, proving you might not always be demanded after the queue is formed, as one might hear. (5)

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Handel, Water Music • The English Concert/Pinnock. "Vital" —Ovation Archiv 15306

The Academy—By Request Academy of St. Martin/Marriner. Sheep May Safely Graze, Pastoral Sym., more. Angel 54094

Pavarotti At Carnegie Hall Songs and arias by Schubert, others. London 15311

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Simon Rattle: The Jazz Album London Sinfonietta. Rhapsody In Blue, Dardanella, more. Angel 72226

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Rachmaninov, Symphony No. 1 Concertgebouw Orchestra/ Ashkenazy. London 15347

Fête à la Française • Sorcerer's Apprentice, many more. Montreal/Dutoit. London 25235

Itzhak Perlman: Brahms, Violin Sonatas; more • Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. Angel 33760

Ute Lemper Sings Kurt Weill Mack The Knife, Speak Low, I'm A Stranger Here Myself, more. London 15163

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Strauss, Also sprach Zarathustra • Chicago Symphony/Reiner. 63627*

Pachelbel Canon & Gigue More by Haydn, Purcell, others. Pinnock cond. Archiv 25036

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Reich, Sextet; 6 Marimbas Steve Reich & Musicians with Manhattan Marimba Quartet, others. Nonesuch 00520

Ravel, Piano Concertos; more Argerich & Béroff, pianos. Abbado cond. DG 15462

Adams, *The Chairman* Dances; more • San Francisco Symphony/deWaart. Nonesuch 00491

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Mozart, Overtures • Magic Flute, Marriage Of Figaro, more. Marriner conducts. Angel 34267

Mozart, Clarinet Conc.; Horn Conc. 1 & 4 • Neidich, Jolley; Orpheus Chamb. Orch. DG 15481

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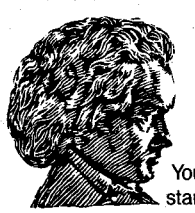

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